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THE LATER
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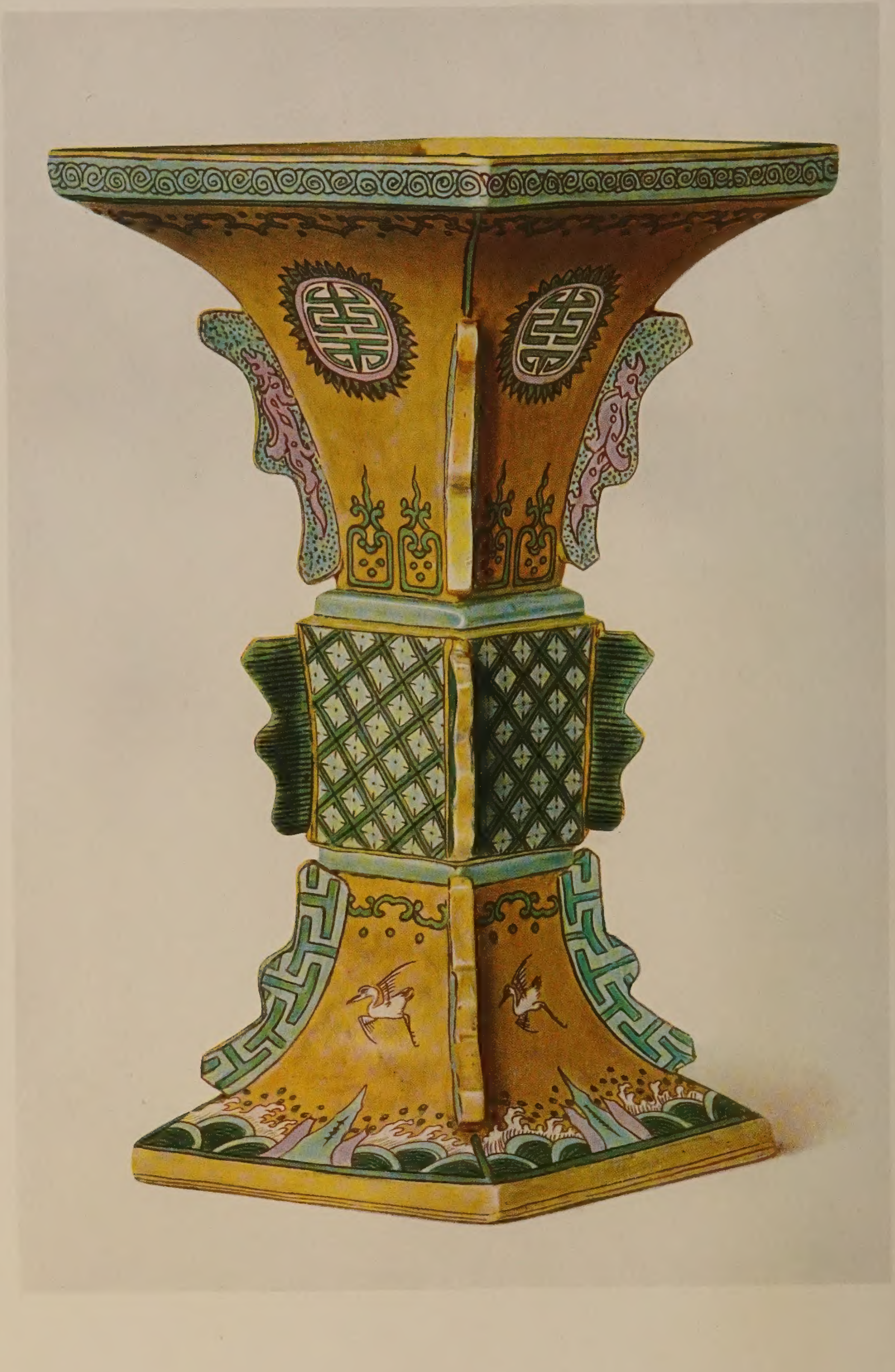

THE LATER CERAMIC WARES OF CHINA

BEING THE BLUE AND WHITE, *FAMILLE VERTE*, *FAMILLE ROSE*, MONOCHROMES, ETC., OF THE K'ANG HSI, YUNG CHÊNG, CH'IEN LUNG AND OTHER PERIODS OF THE CH'ING DYNASTY

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"THE WARES OF THE MING DYNASTY," ETC. ETC.

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PREFACE

The *Later Ceramic Wares of China* is the natural sequel to the *Wares of the Ming Dynasty*, and it carries the story of Chinese pottery and porcelain down to our own times, completing the trilogy which started with the *Early Ceramic Wares of China*. It deals with the potter's art under the Ch'ing dynasty of the Manchus (1644–1912).

The names of three chief Manchu emperors, K'ang Hsi, Yung Chêng and Ch'ien Lung, are household words with collectors of porcelain; and the book is mainly devoted to the porcelain made during those three famous reigns at Ching-tê Chên, the Ceramic metropolis of China. There are chapters on the pottery, stoneware and porcelain made at other centres and a few plates to illustrate them, but they occupy a relatively small part of the whole. There is nothing disproportionate, however, in this division of the subject, from the collector's point of view, for it can be said without exaggeration that 90 per cent of the Manchu wares in European collections were made at Ching-tê Chên.

In setting out such information as the collector will require on the Manchu porcelain, we are covering familiar ground. There is little scope here for original research, and we can only aim at bringing the subject-matter up to date and making certain necessary emendations. There is, however, plenty of scope for variety in illustrations and I have endeavoured to represent all the principal types, not so much from the public collections, which are well known, as from the best private collections which the public has less opportunity of seeing. Such a plan was only practicable with the sympathetic co-operation of the many collectors whose names appear in the list of plates. To all of these I tender my sincere thanks for their invaluable help, and particularly to Mr. Leonard Gow who most generously gave me the use of a large number of colour-blocks illustrating part of his choice collection.

The romanization of Chinese characters and place-names is that used in the other volumes of the series, and my thanks are due to Dr. Lionel Giles for special attention to these while looking over my proofs.

R. L. HOBSON.

November, 1924.

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[1] Abbreviated throughout to *O.C.A.*

[2] Abbreviated throughout to *C.P.P.*

[3] Abbreviated throughout to *B.M. Guide.*

INTRODUCTION

Unlike those of the Ming, Sung and earlier periods, the later ceramic wares of China, those made under the Manchu dynasty which ruled from 1644 to 1912, have long been familiar to the Western world. They consist almost entirely of that Chinese porcelain which has been a household word in Europe for two and a half centuries. During the whole of this period there has been a brisk trade between China and the West, and our ancestors since the days of Charles the First have been able to obtain their goods direct from the Chinese manufacturers. Consequently there is no lack of specimens for the collector and student of the present day: nor is there any lack of material for historical investigation.

The great manufacturing centre at Ching-tê Chên, at which the bulk of this porcelain was made, may not be as familiar to us as Stoke-upon-Trent; but we have at least three first-hand accounts of it written by Europeans. The most important of these is from the pen of the Jesuit father d'Entrecolles, who lived and worked for many years among the potters at Ching-tê Chên in the second half of the brilliant K'ang Hsi period. The two others were written by the French Consul, M. Scherzer,[1] and the British Consul, W. J. Clennell, after visits to Ching-tê Chên in 1881 and 1905 respectively. In spite of the long interval of time and the difference in material conditions which separate the periods thus described, we cannot fail in reading these three stories to be impressed with the continuity of Chinese industrial processes. In fact M. Scherzer's scientific observations are the most valuable commentary we have on the more intimate, though less accurate, account given by Père d'Entrecolles.

There are besides important native sources of information at our disposal. The *T'ao shuo*, written in the Ch'ien Lung period, and the *Ching tê chên t'ao lu*, written in the reign of Chia Ch'ing, are comprehensive, if rather compressed, histories of Chinese ceramics; and T'ang Ying, the most distinguished of all the superintendents of the Imperial porcelain factory, has given us more than one first-hand description of the manufacture which he so ably controlled. It is true that the Chinese histories, which scarcely deign to speak of any but the Imperial wares, are disappointingly brief and uncommunicative; but by a judicious use of all sources, Chinese and European, and by making one serve as commentary on the other, we are able to construct a fairly complete history of this great and prolific period of Chinese ceramic history. This interesting task has been rendered easy to-day by the admirable work of previous writers, among whom the first place must be given to Julien, translator of the greater part of the *T'ao lu*, and to S. W. Bushell. The latter not only translated the *T'ao shuo* and other Chinese texts, but collated all the native accounts in his invaluable *Oriental Ceramic Art*, which is further illuminated by his own experiences in China. The names of other pioneers such as Jacquemart, Franks, Grandidier, etc., will be found in the bibliography.

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[1] See Vogt, M. G., *Rescherches sur les Porcelaines Chinoises,* Bulletin de la Société d'encouragement pour l'industrie nationale, Paris, 1900, containing M. Scherzer's report on Ching-tê Chên.

But valuable, nay indispensable, as all this written information undoubtedly is, it would be dry bones were it not vitalised by the living specimens in our collections. There is doubtless still a great quantity of old porcelain hoarded in China, but over there museums are few and private collections are difficult, often quite impossible, of access. Indeed a Chinese enthusiast has confessed with sorrow that he had to come to Europe to study his native wares. Here he could see the wonderful historic collection in the Johanneum at Dresden, made at the end of the 17th and in the early part of the 18th centuries: besides the more modern collections in the big museums in Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam and London. The Londoner is more fortunate in this respect. He has no need to travel to see Chinese porcelain at its best. The Victoria and Albert and the British Museums will show him almost all that he can require; while both London and the country in general are rich in splendid private collections. America is not less favoured; indeed in some respects it is even more so: for the vast collections in New York are not only rich in all varieties of the Manchu porcelains, but they are distinctly superior to the European in the matter of monochromes.

Naturally the formation of these large collections has been a drain upon the market and we are lucky to have had a Salting and a Franks to ensure our National Museums for all time a supply of the best and most representative specimens. For in spite of the enormous output of Ching-tê Chên during the Ch'ing dynasty, the higher qualities of Chinese porcelain of the best periods are scarce to-day and difficult to come by.

Time has taken a greedy toll of these fragile wares and there are many eager competitors for what remains: for the fascination exercised by Chinese porcelain is incredible. Once the collector has come under its spell, he is apt to desert all his old ceramic loves. And what after all are the European porcelains as compared with the Chinese? Mere things of yesterday, the work of pupils who learnt the rudiments of their art from the Oriental. Europe had scarcely begun to feel its way to porcelain manufacture in the early part of the 18th century when the art of the Manchu potter was at its zenith, and the Manchu potter had already centuries of tradition behind him. The skill of the Chinese potter had long been proverbial: by this time it was intuitive. Satisfying forms flowed spontaneously from his wheel: his decorative instinct was sure: he had a genius for colour, and the combinations in his colour schemes are as daring as those of Nature herself and as triumphant. Natural aptitude and long training placed him beyond competition, and it would seem that he enjoyed some material advantages besides over his fellows in Europe. For what European porcelain can boast an underglaze blue comparable with that of the K'ang Hsi blue and white? Where are there enamels with the brilliancy of the *famille verte*? Where else the depth and lustre of the Chinese monochrome glazes? It is no discredit to the young factories that they failed to catch up the Chinese. They produced many things of great merit such as the Meissen figures and the Sèvres biscuit. But they have no decorated porcelain to compare with the K'ang Hsi blue and white prunus jars, the fine powder-blue, the *sang de bœuf* monochrome or the *famille noire*. They were competing with a highly gifted race which had a start of many centuries, and at the moment when science might have brought them on terms of technical equality, industrialism came and crushed the soul out of their art.

The result is that Chinese porcelain holds its position unchallenged. It can only be compared with itself. We may canvass the relative merits of the wares of the different dynasties, and indeed that is a subject which is debated fiercely. But every age has its virtues, and those who prefer the simple strength of the Sung masterpieces and the restful tints of their monochrome glazes, or the bold three-colour wares of the Ming and the freshness of the Ming painted porcelains, will at any rate admit the mastery of technique displayed by the early Manchu potters and the brave colouring of their wares. It will, however, be more profitable here to confine our comparisons to the Manchu dynasty and to consider the relative merits of the porcelain in its several periods.

European prejudice is all in favour of the K'ang Hsi porcelains. They were the first to be imported in large quantities and they obtained a prestige which was not easily shaken. Of the export porcelains they are undoubtedly the best. The Dresden Collection supplies abundant confirmation of this, showing as it does that the quality of the blue and white and *famille verte* made for export in the K'ang Hsi period was relatively high; and if these wares did not always reflect the best native taste, they came near to it.

The predilection for blue and white and *famille verte* has remained a tradition in our own country.

In the succeeding period, the age of the *famille rose*, the export trade was firmly centred in Canton where there were streets of enamellers at work decorating the white porcelain for Europe and for the most part in European taste. Special types like the Mandarin porcelain were made to supplement the cargoes of the tea merchants, and by the end of the 18th century the export ware had become effectively vulgarised. It was not indeed till the last half of the 19th century that Europe again got a true vision of the best Chinese porcelain. This time it was the loot of palaces, the finest porcelain of the best periods and in true Chinese taste. Collectors were not slow to realise the merits of this rediscovered treasure: and European buyers went to China and bought up the old porcelains on every hand. But the old fashions still held their ground: the blue and white and *famille verte* remained in strong demand, and we find to-day that there are types of porcelain, long highly valued in China, which are only now coming into vogue in Europe. Such are the smaller specimens of single-colour glazes, the "steatitic" blue and white, the finer Yung Chêng and Ch'ien Lung *famille rose*, the porcelain painted in the "Ku-yüeh" style, and even the 19th century palace wares, all of which have attractions of a different order from the bold colouring and broad effects of the K'ang Hsi *famille verte* and blue and white.

On the refined Yung Chêng and Ch'ien Lung palace wares delicately painted and highly naturalistic floral designs are a conspicuous feature: the decoration is nicely balanced and the beautiful white porcelain background is allowed full scope. Compared with these, the contemporary Canton ruby-back dishes appear overloaded. The painting on the Ku-yüeh porcelain is like that of a fine water-colour; and there is a savour of European style in the shading of its rocks and flowers and in the pose and grouping of its figure subjects. The little objects—mostly for use or ornament on the writing table—with choice monochrome glazes or in "steatitic" blue and white, perfect alike in colour and material, are delicacy personified.

Again the European collector concentrates on the porcelain of the three reigns—K'ang Hsi, Yung Chêng and Ch'ien Lung. The Chinese, on the other hand, does not scorn the finer wares of the 19th century which carried on the traditions of Yung Chêng and Ch'ien Lung. We are indeed apt to underestimate the capacity of the 19th century potters. True the general run of these later wares, and particularly of the trade goods, show a decided deterioration; but M. Scherzer, after his visit to Ching-tê Chên in 1882, makes the significant statement that certain rice-bowls then made for the Imperial palace could not be distinguished, save for their reign-marks, from those of the K'ang Hsi period; and no one knows better than the dealer and collector that some of the late copies of the more elaborate K'ang Hsi vases are dangerously good. It is usually a certain stiffness of drawing and a slight want of grace in form that betrays these imitative pieces, rather than any conspicuous lack of quality in the enamels, and these are points which it is easy for the enthusiast to overlook.

As the question of imitations has arisen, we may add that the collector needs to be on his guard against those made in Europe as well as in the East. Herend and Sèvres have shown how closely the European can copy Chinese porcelain when he is so minded; and there are Paris imitations of *famille verte* and Canton ruby-back wares which find their way into the cabinets of unwary amateurs. But it must be confessed that the trained eye should not be deceived by these Western copies, however carefully made: for they are betrayed by differences not only in drawing and in the tone of the enamels but in the basic material. Exhibited side by side with the originals at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in the spring of 1924, the French copies appeared childishly easy to distinguish. Only when seen apart and in indifferent light are they likely to deceive a collector of any experience. But the various types of imitations are discussed in different parts of the book and we need not pursue the subject further among these generalities.

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL AND GENERAL

History contains few spectacles so remarkable as that of the great Chinese Empire conquered by the Manchus. Numerically the Chinese must have been ten times stronger than the Manchus even at the moment of their largest expansion, and their resources were infinitely greater. But the Manchus had what the Chinese lacked, unity of purpose and strong capable leaders.

While the degenerate and eunuch-ridden dynasty of the Mings was tottering to its fall and the forces of rebellion were threatening it from within, the Manchu national hero, Nurhachu, was steadily welding the Tartar tribes in the north into a compact nation of warriors. In his first conflict with China in 1618 he smashed three armies each as large as his own by striking at each before they could unite, and but for the stubborn resistance offered by the frontier fortresses he could have successfully invaded China in the reign of T'ien Ch'i. Nurhachu died in 1626 and was succeeded by his son, who took the Chinese name of T'ai Tsung. The latter proceeded to consolidate his power by the conquest of the border tribes of Mongols, and, as if to fit his people for their destiny, he modelled their government on Chinese lines, adopting both the Chinese literature and the Chinese religions. Among the gods borrowed from China by the Manchus was Kuan Ti, the god of war. T'ai Tsung also gave to his house the dynastic title of Ta Ch'ing, under which it was fated to replace the Mings. But T'ai Tsung died in 1643 and was succeeded by his son, Shun Chih, who was then at the tender age of nine.

It is doubtful if the Ta Ch'ing dynasty would ever have ruled in Peking but for the quarrels of the Chinese leaders. The Ming dynasty was overthrown in 1644 by a successful rebellion led by Li Tzŭ-ch'êng who was admitted by treachery into Peking. There he committed an act of rapacity which aroused the mortal enmity of Wu San-kuei, a competent general who was holding the key position at Shanhaikuan against the Manchus. Wu, thirsting for revenge, invited the Manchu regent to join him against Li Tzŭ-ch'êng, who marched to meet him at Shanhaikuan. A battle ensued in which Li was completely defeated and Wu with his Manchu allies followed him up to Peking. The price paid to the Manchu regent was the throne of China. He entered Peking on June 5th, 1644, and prepared the way for Shun Chih, who ascended the throne in October of the same year.

It still remained to conquer the rest of China. The shaved head and the pigtail, which the Manchus insisted on the Chinese adopting as a sign of subjection, were not readily accepted, and the patriots rallied to one after another of the fugitive Ming princes. Fourteen years of fighting, with the usual accompaniment of bloody massacres, were needed before the last resistance was crushed in the south-west, and the whole Empire was firmly held by Manchu garrisons.

Shun Chih died in 1661. He was succeeded by his son, who reigned under the name of K'ang Hsi, at the tender age of eight. At the age of fourteen K'ang Hsi assumed the reins of power which had hitherto been held for him by his guardians or regents, and he showed himself from the first an able, brave, and energetic ruler. However calamitous to the Chinese was the period of conquest while the Manchus were imposing their yoke upon them, there is no doubt that the first Manchu Emperors were among the best rulers which China ever had. Historians rank K'ang Hsi as equal to the two greatest Chinese Emperors, T'ai Tsung of the T'ang dynasty, and his own grandson Ch'ien Lung; and an intimate picture of him by a European priest includes the following encomium[1]: "This prince was one of the most extraordinary men who are only met with once in the course of several centuries. He placed no limit to his desire for knowledge, and of all the princes of Asia there was none with so great a taste for the arts and sciences."

But the young Emperor's firm and beneficent rule did not suit some of his princes who were anxious to establish feudal power in various parts of China. Called upon to disband their forces, three of them, including the powerful Wu San-kuei, started the formidable rebellion of the San Fan, or Three Princes, in 1673. At one time eleven provinces were in their hands and the throne of the Manchus was seriously threatened. But chiefly by the skilful direction of the campaign by K'ang Hsi himself the rebellion was eventually crushed in 1681. From this trial the Emperor came out stronger than ever, and his long and successful reign did not end till December, 1722.

The events thus briefly surveyed belong to the domain of general history; but they had their reactions on the history of one of China's most noted products to which this book is devoted. The fierce dynastic struggles, the wars and rebellions which raged throughout the eighteen provinces between 1640 and 1680 were not a favourable background for the arts of peace, and we cannot imagine that much attention was given during these years to the development of the ceramic industry. Ching-tê Chên itself, the centre of the manufacture of porcelain, was invaded during the San Fan rebellion and the Imperial factory was destroyed. So that if there had been any revival of activity there in the first years of K'ang Hsi, it must have suffered a rude set-back.

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[1] See Li Ung Bing, *Outlines of Chinese History*, 1914, pp. 407 and 408.

In point of fact we hear little of the Imperial factory in the early part of the Manchu dynasty. It was certainly in existence, for Shun Chih sent orders in 1654 and 1659, which are chiefly remembered for the unavailing trouble which they caused. They included a requisition for large "dragon-bowls"[1], and plaques[2] for inlaying a palace balustrade. But the workmen toiled for four years without success to make the former; and both orders were eventually withdrawn. The factory at the time was under the control of the Viceroy Lang Ting-tso, and it has been suggested that he was in some way connected with the famous *lang yao* which we shall have occasion to discuss later. But the idea may be dismissed as in the highest degree improbable.

In 1680 or thereabouts a serious danger to the prestige of Ching-tê Chên was averted. The Emperor, whose enlightened interest in the arts endeared him to the Chinese, ordered the establishment of twenty-seven workshops or academies in the Palace precincts at Peking for the fostering of various arts. They included manufactures of metalwork, glass, enamel, jade, and lacquer; and we are told that he planned in addition an Imperial porcelain factory at Peking. Machinery, material, and workmen were all requisitioned from Ching-tê Chên, but, though the most complete preparations were made, the project fell through. Vested interests and political considerations are suggested to explain the failure; and, for whatever reason, the Emperor not only abandoned this enterprise, but gave the full weight of his patronage to the expansion of the industry at Ching-tê Chên.

The Imperial factory was rebuilt and placed under the care of a resident official sent from the Imperial household, and an era of exceptional brilliancy in the porcelain industry was initiated. "Previously to this," the *T'ao shuo*[3] tells us, "the first-class workmen had been levied from the different districts of Jao-chou, but now all this was stopped, and as each manufactory was started, the artisans were collected and materials provided, the expenses being defrayed from the Imperial exchequer and the money paid, when due, in accordance with the market prices. Even the expenses for carriage were not required from the different districts. None of the proper duties of the local officers were interfered with; both the officials and the common people enjoyed the benefit, and the processes of manufacture were all much improved."

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[1] The dimensions of the "dragon-bowls" were to be 2½ ft. high, 3½ ft. in diameter, 3 in. thick in the sides and 5 in. at the bottom.

[2] The plaques were required to be 3 ft. by 2½ ft. and 3 in. thick.

[3] Bushell, *Description of Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, p. 3.

Further than this, a preface to the same book, written by Ch'iu Yüeh-hsiu, says "under the reigning dynasty the proper government officials are carefully selected, and they give money according to the market price and even in excess, so that the people come joyfully, and there are several thousands working daily in the potteries. The producers have in this way become rich, they spare no labour, and do not grudge expense, so that the ware turned out is of novel design and improved daily. Even when compared with that of former dynasties, which used to be lauded as being as precious as gold or jade, there is some that excels, none that fails to come up to the old, and, if it be not now described, after generations will be unable to discuss it."

Chinese writers confine their remarks almost entirely to the affairs of the State factory, but we may fairly assume that the private factories at Ching-tê Chên shared in the improved conditions. Ching-tê Chên has been since the beginning of the Ming dynasty the ceramic metropolis of China. At least eighty per cent of the fine porcelain, for which China has been famous for centuries, comes from that centre and the whole of this book, with the exception of a few chapters, must necessarily be devoted to it. It is a large unwalled town or mart (*chên*) on the south bank of the Ch'ang River, in the north-east of the province of Kiangsi. This river flows into the Poyang Lake, which is connected with the Yangtse, so that the wares of Ching-tê Chên can be carried by water to that great highway of commerce, or southward by the Kan River (which also flows into the Poyang Lake) and the North River to Canton. They are also transported by coolies overland into Anhwei and other parts.

We are fortunate in having an excellent pen picture of the place written by Père d'Entrecolles[1] in 1712, at the very height of the K'ang Hsi period. He describes the great town encircled by hills, with its double and triple lines of junks in the port: the whirling flames from the kilns which give it at night the appearance of a burning town: its huge population, estimated at a million souls, all directly or indirectly interested in the products of its "three thousand" kilns. There is work for all; even the halt, the maimed and the blind who can make a living by grinding colours. The shops are well stocked, the streets alive with busy people. There is wealth enough to tempt all the thieves in China, but the police keep everything in order and maintain complete security for the whole place.

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[1] Another picture of Ching-tê Chên is given by Mr. W. J. Clennell in his *Journey in the Interior of Kiangsi* (printed by H.M. Stationery Office) in 1905. It is interesting to observe that this description differs very little from that given by the Jesuit father two hundred years before, except that the number of kilns was infinitely less in 1905.

The letters of Père d'Entrecolles, to which we shall refer very frequently, give a most interesting description of the processes of porcelain making which he learnt partly from his congregation and partly by personal observation at Ching-tê Chên. They were evidently written with an object, namely, to impart his knowledge of the subject to his friends in France who were struggling with the mysteries of porcelain manufacture. But we have another and a better first-hand authority to consult in the "twenty illustrations of the Manufacture of Porcelain" described by no less a person than T'ang Ying, the director of the Imperial factory in the reign of Ch'ien Lung.

In point of fact the manufacturing processes in use in the Ch'ing dynasty do not differ in principle from those of the Ming which were described in the second volume of this series. But it may be convenient for the reader if they are briefly set out again following the order of T'ang Ying's notes.

The two basic materials of porcelain are china clay (*kaolin*) and china stone. The former was found in the neighbourhood of Jaochow, the district city of Ching-tê Chên, but the latter had to be brought a distance of about seventy miles from Ch'i-men in Anhwei. It was mined in the mountains, crushed and made up in small bricks (*tun*), whence its name *pai tun tzŭ* or *petuntse* (white bricklets). Père d'Entrecolles tells us that it arrived in the small boats which came down stream to Ching-tê Chên.

Both the clay and the stone passed through drastic purification at the factory before they were made up into a dough-like mass ready for the potter. The glaze was a mixture of china stone and burnt lime and fern ashes, the superior qualities of glaze containing a higher proportion of the stone.

In preparing the ware, moulds were used for the shapes which required them, but rounded objects were "thrown" on the wheel. If the vessels thus formed were to be decorated in blue, they were now ready to receive the colour which was applied to the dried porcelain body. The blue material (cobaltiferous ore of manganese) was collected on the hills of Shao-hsing and Chin-hua in the province of Chekiang. It had to be roasted, crushed to powder and laboriously refined before it was fit for use. It was then mixed with water and painted on with a brush. The next process was the application of the glaze, either by immersing the vessel in a tub of liquid glaze or by spraying the glaze on through a tube. The older process of painting the glaze on with a large brush was now little used. The final processes in the preparation of the rounded ware were the trimming of the foot which had been left rough for handling, and the writing and glazing of the mark.

The formed, painted, and glazed vessel was now ready for the supreme operation of firing; but to protect it from damage in the kiln it had to be placed in a fire-clay case or seggar. The seggars were carefully stacked in the kiln, which measured about ten feet in width and height and something more in length. The furnaces, fed with wood, were then lighted and kept burning for about three days. On the fourth day, when relatively cool, they were opened and the potter knew if his venture had been a success. Père d'Entrecolles tells us that so many firings were unsuccessful in his time that many potters were ruined and the trade was something of a gamble. Much might, however, be done to ensure success by the proper propitiation of the god of " Fire and Blast." The ware was now withdrawn from the kiln. If it had been painted with blue and successfully fired, it came out with a brilliant blue decoration complete and ready for the market. The glaze covering is necessary for the development of the blue colour: without glaze it would merely fire black.

If, on the other hand, the ware was destined to be painted in enamel colours, such as the *famille verte* and *famille rose*, it now proceeded to the enamellers' sheds, and received its decoration in vitrifiable enamels applied by the brush to the glazed surface. To develop these enamels and to make them adhere to the surface another firing was necessary, but only at a comparatively low temperature and in a small kiln or stove called a " muffle." If gold was included in the decoration, yet another firing at a still lower temperature was needed. The final operations were grading the ware and packing it for transport. The inferior grades of porcelain were apparently reserved for local sale.

It will be understood that this brief and summary sketch takes no account of the many variations in composition of paste and glaze to produce different qualities of ware, nor of the making of coloured glazes, nor of such processes as enamelling on the biscuit, carving, etching, piercing, the attachment of handles or relief ornaments with liquid clay, the jointing of sections of moulded and polygonal wares, etc., things which will be noted from time to time in the descriptions of type specimens.

Nor does it pretend to repeat all the details given by T'ang Ying in his valuable notes. These are set out in full in the *T'ao Shuo* with a commentary by the author of that book, and they can be conveniently studied in Bushell's translation.[1] It will, however, help the reader who is not familiar with ceramic processes to understand the more common technicalities which are inevitable in a book of this kind.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 7–30.

CHAPTER II

THE EARLY CH'ING WARE AND K'ANG HSI BLUE AND WHITE

We have little positive information about the porcelain made in the first Manchu period. The Imperial factory was at work, but we only hear of its failure to make the large-sized dragon fish-bowls and porcelain plaques 3 by 2½ ft. in area. It is no surprise that the latter proved impracticable, as Père d'Entrecolles tells us in 1712 that about a foot square was the largest size in plaques which could be conveniently made in his time. It will, however, be safe to assume that the Shun Chih wares were of the "transition" type described in a late chapter of *The Wares of the Ming Dynasty*. This is borne out by the only dated specimen we have met, a figure in Dr. Lindley Scott's Collection with three colour glazes in late Ming style, and by a blue and white bowl in the British Museum which is decorated with lions in peony scrolls in Ming style in a greyish-blue and marked *Ta Ch'ing nien chih* (made in the Great Ch'ing dynasty). Such a mark would be appropriate in the first reign of the dynasty and in no other.

An interesting little group of blue and white porcelain in the British Museum doubtless contains some Shun Chih wares as well as early K'ang Hsi. It consists of specimens recovered from sunken Dutch ships, wrecked in Table Bay, among which was the *Haarlem*, lost in 1648. Unfortunately there is nothing to show which particular specimens, if any, came from the *Haarlem* itself; but the group is worth the attention of collectors. It comprises small plates, saucer dishes, cups and saucers (some small and of eggshell thinness), a few jars and diminutive vases of blue and white[1] beside two pieces of white Fukien porcelain.[2] Most of the blue and white is thin, crisp porcelain, lightly moulded with leaf-shaped panels and painted with slight floral designs, deer, birds, etc., and figure subjects which include mounted warriors riding off with ladies, ladies and children and those single figures of ladies standing beside a vase of flowers which the Dutch called *lange lijsen* (long Elizas). Every collector knows the latter type and also the "love chase" saucer dishes, on which a man and woman are depicted on horseback hunting a hare. The latter are of the same class as the Table Bay porcelain. The ware is very like that crisp, sharply moulded porcelain largely made for export in the late Ming days, but there are differences in tone and finish which the collector quickly notices, and the "love chase" dishes are nearly always marked with the reign name of Ch'êng Hua.

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[1] In the Table-case in Bay XXX.

[2] In the Pier-case in Bay XXVIII.

This and some of the Table Bay types are usually painted in a pale silvery blue, but there are others in which the blue is sapphire of the K'ang Hsi kind or dark indigo. The marks on the Table Bay series include the apocryphal date mark of the Ming Emperor Ch'êng Hua and that of K'ang Hsi, besides a number of complimentary marks such as *yü* (jade) and the like, and a few "Hall marks."[1]

A comparison of the material enables us to bring quite a number of blue and white specimens into line with this group and also to identify some of the export *famille verte* porcelain with it. The latter are dishes and cups and saucers of the same thin crisply moulded porcelain, with rows of petal-shaped compartments brightly enamelled in colours. It is among such wares as these we should look for examples of the early *famille verte* porcelains, and not among the black "hawthorn" vases and other glories of the K'ang Hsi period which are not likely to have been made before the reconstruction of 1680.

A new era began with this date and the Emperor, who presumably had abandoned the idea of transferring the Imperial manufacture to Peking, appointed Ts'ang Ying-hsüan to the control of the Imperial factory. Ts'ang was one of the three great directors—Ts'ang, Nien, and T'ang—whose able management resulted in one of the most brilliant periods in Chinese ceramic annals, the seventy years between 1680 and 1750. Ts'ang's merits are poetically proclaimed by his successor T'ang in the following words, "when Ts'ang was in charge of the factory the god laid his finger on the designs and protected the porcelain in the kiln, so that it naturally came out perfect." It is much to be regretted that T'ang did not condescend to some detail in speaking of his predecessor. It would have been interesting to know if he had excelled in this or that kind of ware and if he had any special inventions to his credit. The *T'ao lu* is only a little more explicit. It tells us that the material used at this time was excellent and that every colour was produced. The "eel yellow," turquoise, and "spotted yellow" were the most beautiful, but the "pale yellow," brown and purple, the green, the soufflé red and soufflé blue were also good. We shall return to these colours later on, but it will be convenient to take the chief types of K'ang Hsi porcelain in order and the first place must be given to the blue and white.[1]

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[1] See p. 142.

Since the beginning of the Ming dynasty underglaze blue had been regarded as the most suitable medium for pictorial decoration. The greater part of the Imperial Ming wares had been blue and white, and collectors to-day find this kind of porcelain exceedingly attractive in the freshness of its designs and the variety of its tones of blue. The Ming blue was sometimes pale and silvery, sometimes an intense violet, and again it degenerated into indigo and grey. Much depended on the supplies of the basic cobalt, which were fitful and varied, and on the trouble taken to refine this mineral. But the characteristics of Ming blue and white have been set out in detail in the preceding volume and they need only be recalled here to contrast them with those of the K'ang Hsi ware.

The vogue of the blue and white was not seriously shaken before the end of the K'ang Hsi period, when the *famille rose* enamels came into high favour. Vast quantities of it were required by the home market and the demand of the European merchants was insatiable. Père d'Entrecolles evidently thought at one time that the traders took little else. Much of this imported blue and white has survived in Europe to the present day, and it must be confessed that its popularity was thoroughly deserved. It was never cheap. When my lord of Bristol[2] in 1690 bought from " Medina ye Jew " and " Collemar ye Dutchman " tea-pots, large jars, china beakers, old china bottles, dishes, rice pots, etc., " for dear wife," he had to pay substantial sums. But they are nothing to the price which the amateur will gladly give to-day for the superior qualities of blue and white, and even the lower grades of the ware have a merit which is recognised by the market. The K'ang Hsi blue and white has all, even the least pretentious of it, a definite cachet, and the best of it has a decorative value to which few porcelains can aspire.

Chinese blue and white has always been the despair of the European potters. Try as they would, they have never succeeded in controlling the flow of the colour, as it was controlled in the graded washes of the K'ang Hsi ware, nor in reproducing the luminous depths or pure sapphire tint of the Chinese blue. The Japanese have been more successful, especially in their renderings of the Ming types, but even they have not made anything comparable to the good K'ang Hsi blue and white. One outstanding difference between the Chinese technique and all others is that the Chinese painted the blue on the raw body of the porcelain and completed the firing of the body, glaze, and colour in one operation. But this does not seem sufficient to account for the whole of their success. It has been suggested by a potter that the use of tin in the glaze was the secret of the brilliance of the Chinese blue. Only the potter expert can pronounce on the feasibility of such an explanation, and we await with interest some authoritative pronouncement on this interesting, but purely technical, question. Meanwhile it is safe to say that as compared with other Chinese blue and white the K'ang Hsi owes its distinctive virtues to careful workmanship.

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[1] The name " Old Nanking," which is still current in the sale-rooms for blue and white porcelain, is doubtless due to the fact that much of the ware was shipped at the port of Nanking on the Yangtse. As far as we know none of it was made at that city.

[2] Diary of John Hervey, First Earl of Bristol.

Take a good specimen and examine it. The body material is clean white and of fine, close grain. This may be seen and felt at the edge of the foot-rim which is free from glaze, and the unctuous smoothness of the paste there observable is the result of careful preparation of the china clay and stone. The form of the vessel, whatever it is, is well-proportioned and shapely, particularly if it has been " thrown " on the potter's wheel, and the potting is invariably true. The glaze is, as it should be, unobtrusive but clear, limpid and lustrous and without any colour except that faintest tinge of green which helps so much to harmonise the blue decoration with the white ground. Together the body and glaze combine to make a solid white like well-set curds, and in this ground the blue is free to display its qualities. The quality of the blue is of supreme importance to the collector. It may be light or dark according to taste, silvery or deep sapphire, but it must be pure and free from any tinge of red or grey. The K'ang Hsi style of painting with its faint outlines[1] filled with graded washes is an exacting test of the quality of the blue ; the marbled masses of colour at once become heavy and dull if the blue is not pure, and this purity was only obtained by refining the mineral cobalt with scrupulous care. The design is well chosen and painted with care, and finally the base is neatly trimmed with clean, straight sides on the foot-rim which is very often shaped at the edge to fit a wooden stand. A wash of glaze protects the base and the mark, if there is one, and covers part of the foot-rim inside, leaving the edge bare, and the body exposed at this point is often slightly browned in the firing.

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[1] In general contrast with the typical Ming style in which the designs are heavily outlined and the filling washes are flat. The Ming blue provides another contrast, as it usually tends to violet or grey.

The actual designs on the K'ang Hsi blue and white are not above criticism. They are often crowded and rather fussy and they rarely have the freshness and spontaneity of the Ming from which they are mainly derived. It was inevitable that the execution should be somewhat mechanical in view of the system employed. Division of labour was not unknown in the Ming factories, but it was reduced to a fine art in the K'ang Hsi period. There were specialists for every kind of decoration, even for the plain rings which border the round wares. There were painters who did the outlines only, some drawing flowers, others birds, others human and animal figures, and others landscape; and another set of workmen filled in the design with washes of blue. Inscriptions were, of course, the work of a specialist, and there was a separate department in the Imperial factory for the marks and seals.

Père d'Entrecolles' comments[1] on the porcelain painters are not very complimentary. He classes them with the ordinary workmen and compares their efficiency to that of a European apprentice of four months' standing. But his remarks are obviously coloured by foreign prejudice which cannot understand the conventions of Chinese drawing; and even he has to admit that "they paint admirable flowers, animals, and landscapes on the porcelain." We realise to-day that, whatever may have been the status of these decorators, and however mechanical their methods, their execution was unexceptionable. One rarely sees bad drawing on a K'ang Hsi specimen.

But this mechanical skill could never have won for the K'ang Hsi blue and white its world-wide recognition, had it not been for the beauty of the blue. One feels that the manufacturers realising this allowed the design to become more and more the mere vehicle for the blue. In the most sumptuous specimens the white is entirely subordinate, and in place of a blue design on an expanse of white ground we have a pattern in white reserved in a ground of marbled blue. The effect is brilliant but almost entirely dependent on the quality of the blue, and to this the collector will pay close attention. The nuances of the colour are endless and the difference between the first, second, and third grades of blue may be scarcely perceptible to the untrained eye, but they soon become apparent when one is buying in competition with experts. There have been, and probably still are, specialists in the trade who have made blue and white a life study and found it a highly remunerative one. But even if we do not aspire to supreme expertise, anyone with ordinary taste and eye can quickly master the broader distinctions between first-rate and good, moderate and poor qualities; and if we do not trust our memories, a small piece of approved blue and white carried in the pocket will serve as a handy touchstone in the auction room and shop.

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[1] In his letter of 1712. See Bushell, *T'ao shuo*, p. 192.

The would-be student should have no difficulty in finding blue and white worthy of his attention. There are many fine collections both public and private, and the Londoner, at any rate, is well provided for. The Salting and other collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the excellent study series in the Franks Collection in the British Museum well-nigh exhaust the subject between them. Liverpool and district will find in the Lady Lever Art Gallery at Port Sunlight a collection of exceptional interest not only for its variety but for a number of outstanding specimens. It includes a whole series of "prunus jars" of first-rate quality, some of the best white on blue imaginable, and a few pieces of exceptional size[1] rivalling the famous "grenadier" vases at Dresden[2].

The Port Sunlight Collection is rich in sets of five (i.e. three covered jars and two beakers, made *en suite*, for the decoration of chimney-pieces). Such things would have no place in Chinese houses and were obviously made for export; but they make it abundantly clear by their excellent quality that in the blue and white at any rate the foreign merchants were now able to secure goods of the best workmanship.

Ysbranti Ides, the Russian envoy who visited Peking in 1692, in his brief note[3] on Chinese porcelain denies that the better class of goods were permitted to leave the country. His statement is doubtless correct to the extent that porcelain in pure native taste, and therefore regarded in China as the best, would not often find its way into the hands of unappreciative foreigners; but there is abundant evidence in the Dresden Collection and elsewhere to show that the wares made for the European trade were often of very high quality.

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[1] One of them measures 40 in. in height.

[2] Augustus the Strong who built up the historic Dresden Collection (largely between the years 1694 and 1705) is said to have purchased a set of these monster vases at the price of a regiment of soldiers. But vases of these dimensions must have been exceptional in the K'ang Hsi period, for Père d'Entrecolles in his second letter (written in 1722) describes covered jars 4 ft. high and made in three sections as having been actually made in that year, though previously regarded as impracticable.

[3] See Marryat, *Pottery and Porcelain*, p. 243: "The finest, richest and most valuable china is not exported, or at least very rarely, particularly a yellow ware, which is destined for the Imperial use, and is prohibited to all other persons."

Something will be said elsewhere about the forms and decorations of Chinese porcelain in general, so that we need not attempt a tabulation of those used in the blue and white. But there are a few specialities of this K'ang Hsi ware with which the reader will wish to be acquainted.

First and foremost are the beautiful covered jars in which the Chinese sent gifts of fragrant tea or sweetmeats to their friends at the New Year. It was an understood thing that the jar should be returned. Of the various names, "ginger jars," "hawthorn jars," and "prunus jars," which we are in the habit of giving to these elegant objects, the last is the most appropriate. Their shape is a squat oval with short straight neck and cap-cover, usually rounded but sometimes flattened on the top, and they are decorated all over with a design of prunus sprays, alternately ascending and descending, in white reserved in a ground of marbled blue which is netted over with lines resembling ice-cracks. The design, in itself of surpassing beauty, is of all others the best calculated to bring out the qualities of the K'ang Hsi blue. The graceful white sprays of blossoming prunus, a free, light, and nicely balanced decoration, stand out in delicious contrast on the intense vibrating sapphire of the background. Like all true Chinese designs it appeals to the mind as well as to the eye. The winter is passing with the breaking ice and the flowering prunus is the earliest herald of spring. New Year's day in the Chinese calendar is three to seven weeks later than in ours, and spring is near enough to make this pleasing symbolism appropriate.

Fine specimens of the prunus jar can be seen at the Victoria and Albert Museum and at Port Sunlight. In these the oval shape is perfectly proportioned with nicely flowing curves: the prunus design is well spaced and devoid of any stiffness: the blue is deep but luminous and of intense sapphire tone: and what is visible of the white is firm, solid and pure. Some have the original cap-covers of rounded form, but by no means all, for time has taken its toll of these fragile objects and they have been replaced by substitutes in wood or porcelain. Connoisseurs will notice that the mouth-rim is straight and low and unglazed where the cover rested, and that the design on the shoulder is finished off with a narrow band of toothed pattern.

But fine specimens such as that shown on Plate 2 are rare and, needless to add, proportionately costly; and even second-rate examples of the K'ang Hsi period are not easy to come by. But the prunus design was too attractive to escape vulgarisation and we find it indifferently expressed on all manner of objects, old and new. In the late and obviously degenerate specimens the drawing is hard and stiff, and the blue garish or washy or impure; and if the "ginger jar" shape is affected, the proportions are bad, the shoulders heavy and the sides flattened. In some cases, too, the prunus design has lost its original character and has even been degraded into a mere pattern of blossoms more or less symmetrically disposed on the blue ground. This treatment of the motive is not suitable for large surfaces, though effective in border patterns and on small areas, as on the exquisite little box on Plate 28.

Though not so much canvassed as the prunus jars there are other types of white on blue porcelain which have great distinction. These are indeed more consistently good than the prunus jars because there has not been so much temptation to vulgarise them. Such are the cylindrical jars, vases, beakers, and double and triple gourds decorated with close patterns of dragons in peony scrolls, with here and there a medallion filled in with a formal flower: or again the same forms with rather similar designs but chiefly composed of rose scrolls, with small oval medallions on the upper part sometimes left blank like ticket labels. This last type, known as "rose and ticket" porcelain, is illustrated on Plate 28. Though of high quality and usually painted with the best blue, these wares are apparently of the export class and occur frequently in the sets which were only made for European use. Another type is the slender cylindrical jar with contracted neck decorated in horizontal belts with archaic dragon and fungus designs alternating with dragons and floral scrolls.[1] This, too, is of the white on blue class and almost always of high quality. Then there are the narrow-necked bottles or sprinklers and the ewers with long slender spouts and handles decorated with large leaf-shaped panels, or mirror-shaped designs linked together, filled in with floral arabesques in white on blue: the surrounding spaces are often diapered with a fine mosaic work of small blossoms or netted patterns.[2] And there are jars with deep borders of *ju-i*-shaped pendants or lambrequins with the same floral arabesques, white on blue. Designs from ancient bronzes, though more common on the Ch'ien Lung wares, were used occasionally by the K'ang Hsi decorators as on the triple-gourd vase on Plate 28.

When we turn to the designs in blue and white we enter a wider field. All the older Ming patterns are apt to recur, landscapes, figure subjects from history and romance, flowers, birds and insects; but we can only specify a few which are of the more peculiarly K'ang Hsi types. Typical landscape designs are illustrated in Plate 29; and the very distinguished vase shown on Plate 27 has a river scene, with fishermen in punts, rendered with an unusual amount of individuality. The basket of flowers, and the pheasant on rockery surrounded by flowering peonies, prunus, bamboos, etc., occur on all qualities of K'ang Hsi porcelain. A close pattern of peony or lotus scrolls punctuated with large blossoms is associated particularly with bottle-shaped vases, with wide globular body and tall, rather thick neck. It is usually painted in blue of good quality; and so is the tiger lily design,[1] commonly seen on tall cylindrical covered cups and jars and sometimes on dishes with moulded gadroon-shaped panels. A particularly fine example of this kind of dish was bequeathed to the British Museum by the late Mr. W. F. Smith.

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[1] *B.M. Guide*, Fig. 107.

[2] *Ibid.*, Figs. 112 and 114.

The aster pattern, a radiating design of stiff flowers on their stalks, is familiar on dishes, plates, and covered bowls. It is generally painted in a dark, rather heavy blue. Another distinctive treatment of a floral motive is seen on the magnolia vases, usually covered jars or beakers with a magnolia in blossom elegantly designed and often lightly moulded in relief, the white blossoms set off by a surround of blue: this is seen on a beaker on Plate 31, and a variety of the same decoration with prunus instead of magnolia occurs on a lovely vase[2] in the Leonard Gow Collection.

The moulding of parts of the ware in slight relief is a feature of much of the export porcelain of this period. Bowls, dishes, cups and saucers and sets of covered jars and beakers are often embellished in this way with bands of small leaf-shaped panels which the decorator filled with landscapes, growing flowers or figures singly or in groups: see Plate 31, Fig. 1. The figures are often tall, graceful ladies (*mei jên*) standing beside a vase of flowers in a garden, singly or in pairs, the "long Elizas" of the Dutch importers. One might have imagined that the traffic in such a dainty and beautiful material as porcelain would stimulate the poetic instincts, but to judge from a few of their consecrated phrases such as "long Elizas," "ginger jars," fish-roe, and frog-spawn patterns, the traders in Oriental goods have been singularly free from romance. These elegantly draped female figures, so irreverently styled *lange lijsen*, are perhaps the most successful of all attempts to use the human figure as a motive for ceramic decoration.

Père d'Entrecolles has some interesting remarks on the porcelain made for the European merchants. The foreigner had a weakness for shapes which were eccentric and bizarre, and consequently the manufacturer who hoped to satisfy his demands quickly was bound to keep a good stock

[1] *B.M. Guide*, Fig. 113.

[2] *Burlington Magazine*, October, 1924.

of moulds of the popular shapes. Anyone who has studied the export K'ang Hsi porcelain will confirm the truth of this statement, which applies to enamelled porcelain no less than to blue and white. Witness the many-sided vases of complex form, built up in sections and moulded with strange excrescences, so often seen in country houses where they have remained since the days of Queen Anne. They are more quaint than beautiful, and the Chinese were obliged to charge high prices for them because such things had no market in China and the merchants rejected them for the slightest flaw, leaving them on their hands. Similarly the jars and vases of abnormal size were mostly made for European consumption. The four-foot jars, for instance, made in 1722, "were ordered by the Canton merchants who deal with Europeans." There were, of course, large objects required occasionally by the Emperor, such as the dragon-fish bowls and the great lamp ordered by the Crown Prince; and we are told that the Mandarins actually consulted Père d'Entrecolles with a view to getting quaint and novel designs to tickle the fancy of their Imperial patrons, but his converts begged him to refrain because of the difficulty of making eccentric forms and the suffering which resulted from the disappointment of the Mandarins. We may, perhaps, trace to some such effort as this the curious bottles with wing handles,[1] obviously copied from Venetian glass, which are occasionally seen in collections of K'ang Hsi blue and white. The more ordinary shapes of European table-wares, plates, cups and saucers, tankards, jugs, salt cellars, etc., were made as a matter of course. The supply of these wares seems still to be inexhaustible, but they are often of indifferent quality with summary and sometimes meaningless decorations painted in a dull, rather heavy blue. It will be noticed as a defect of the Chinese porcelain of this period that the sharp rims of plates and other objects were apt to chip and scale. Père d'Entrecolles tells us that the Chinese, who were conscious of this weakness, tried to remedy it by a special glaze locally applied which got over the trouble without affecting the colour of the ware. At a slightly later date it was the practice to protect the vulnerable edges with a band of lustrous brown glaze.

The marks on the blue and white of this period are varied and peculiar. It is recorded that in 1677 the district prefect forbade the potters at Ching-tê Chên to put the reign-name of the Emperor or any sacred writing on the porcelain, lest it should be broken and desecrated. Though this ordinance can only have remained in force for a limited period, it may have started the practice, which became so general, of using symbols and other substitutes for the K'ang Hsi date marks. Even the reign-names of Ming Emperors, such as Hsüan Tê and Ch'êng Hua, are comparatively common on K'ang Hsi porcelain, whereas the K'ang Hsi mark itself is rarely seen. Its place is taken by marks of commendation, hall-marks, symbols and the like; and sometimes the double ring which encloses the mark is left blank. The result is that many of these substitute marks have come to be regarded with good reason as evidence of K'ang Hsi make, and some of them, such as the character *yü* (jade), as a guarantee of good quality.

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[1] *B.M. Guide*, Fig. 109.

Another mark which occurs on both blue and white and enamelled wares of good quality is evidently of European derivation. It resembles the capital letter G and occurs on certain straight-necked bottles which are painted with floral scrolls in a peculiar style, possibly traceable to Dutch influence.[1] It is doubtless the special mark put on the ware made for some foreign firm.

It remains to mention a few special types of blue and white. We are indebted to Père d'Entrecolles for a description of two of them. The first is the so-called "soft-paste," to use the American name which like so many of the stereotyped terms in ceramic phraseology will not bear examination. "Soft-paste" to the European ear suggests the artificial porcelains of Sèvres and Chelsea, of which the body or paste was indeed relatively soft, whereas that of the Chinese ware is intensely hard. The glaze, on the other hand, is softer than the ordinary felspathic glaze; it contains a softening element of lead and is often crackled. Of the body, Père d'Entrecolles tells us that it was made of *hua shih,* an unctuous soapy material which was generally believed to be soapstone or steatite,[2] in the proportion of eight parts to two of *petuntse.* In other words, *hua shih* took the place of *kaolin,* and the ware would be more correctly described as *hua shih* porcelain.

"The porcelain made with *hua shih,*" to quote our authority, "is rare and far more expensive than the other porcelain. It has an extremely fine grain; and for purposes of painting, when compared with ordinary porcelain, it is almost as vellum to paper. Moreover, this ware is surprisingly light to anyone accustomed to handle other kinds; it is far more fragile than the ordinary, and there is difficulty in finding the exact temperature for its firing. Some of the potters do not use *hua shih* for the body of the ware, but content themselves with making a diluted slip into which they dip their porcelain when dry, so as to give it a coating of *hua shih* before it is painted and glazed. By this means it acquires a certain degree of beauty."

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[1] See p. 143. A blue-and-white bottle with rather European-looking floral scrolls, and this mark is figured in the *B.M. Guide,* Fig. 111.

[2] Vogt, however, who analysed samples of this material from San-pao-p'êng, declares that it contains no magnesium and is a kind of pegmatite rather than soapstone. We have, however, preserved the term "steatitic" to distinguish the special ware made with the *hua shih.*

This is an accurate description of the two kinds of "steatitic" porcelain. That with a full *hua shih* body has a dry, earthy appearance, though fine and unctuous to the touch. The Chinese call it *sha t'ai* (sand bodied) or *chiang t'ai* (paste bodied), and it is quite opaque. Being an expensive ware it was generally used for those dainty little objects, in which the Chinese delight and excel, such as the furniture of the writing-table, water-pots, and water-droppers, diminutive vases and incense burners, and boxes for holding seal vermilion. It was, moreover, decorated by the most skilful painters and with the finest blue and usually in the true calligraphic style in which the effect is obtained by fine brush strokes rather than by graded washes. This carefully pencilled decoration was one of the styles affected by the early Ming blue and white artists, but it was rarely used on the later Ming or the K'ang Hsi blue and white of the ordinary kind.

Père d'Entrecolles was under the impression that this use of *hua shih* was a novelty in 1722, but he so often mistakes revivals for novelties that we do not feel justified in accepting his statement, especially as a blue-painted ware of a type closely resembling the steatitic is known to have been a speciality of certain 16th-century potters.[1] But we do know that it was freely used in the succeeding reigns of Yung Chêng and Ch'ien Lung. In fact one may almost say that the only Ch'ien Lung blue and white worth considering is of the "steatitic" kind. T'ang Ying himself (writing in 1743) says, "there is one kind of blue called onion sprouts which makes very clearly defined strokes and does not run in the fire and this must be used for the most delicate pieces," doubtless an allusion to this dainty ware.

A few examples of this "steatitic" porcelain are shown on Plates 32 and 72. Some of them are from a wonderful cabinet of this ware belonging to Mr. P. David. In looking through this collection one realises the lightness, variety, and charm of this exquisite ware. Some of the pieces are practically opaque and the biscuit seen at the foot-rim is quite dusky. Others, like Fig. 3 of Plate 72, are turned to eggshell thinness and have an uneven orange-peel texture of glaze in addition to the faint crackle. Larger pieces, such as a vase in the British Museum[1] and a fine vase in the David Collection with a figure of Ma Ku and her lion-like monster, are of the second kind and are treated to the surface wash only. They have a dead white surface and traces of crackle in the glaze.

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[1] See *Wares of the Ming Dynasty*, p. 185.

Specimens of both kinds of "steatitic" porcelain are to be seen in our public and private collections. They will be found among the snuff-bottles if nowhere else. But specimens are still to seek of the second kind of ware of which Père d'Entrecolles gives a tantalising description in his letter of 1712.[2] Its manufacture was already a lost art at the time of writing. "The Chinese," he tells us, "once were able to paint on the sides of a piece of porcelain fishes and other creatures which were only visible when the vessel was filled with liquid. They call this ware *chia ch'ing*, i.e. blue put in press, because of the way in which the blue is applied. The following is all they can recall of the secret: perhaps European imagination will supply what the Chinese have forgotten. The porcelain to be painted in this way must be very thin: when it is dry, a rather strong blue is applied, not to the exterior as is usual but to the sides of the interior: fishes are the usual motive, because their apparition when the cup is filled with water is specially appropriate. When the colour is dry, it is covered with a thin layer of diluted slip made of the same material as the porcelain. This coating imprisons the blue between two layers of clay; and when the coating is dry, glaze is sprayed over the interior of the piece. Presently it is put on the lathe, and as it has been given some substance on the interior, it is pared down outside as fine as is possible without cutting into the colour. Then the exterior is dipped in glaze, and when all is dry it is baked in the ordinary kiln. It is an extremely delicate operation, requiring a skill which apparently the Chinese no longer possess. Still they try occasionally to recover the secret of this mysterious decoration, but without success. One of them assured me that he had recently made a new attempt and had almost succeeded."

The construction of such a piece of porcelain does not seem inherently impossible. That it would require extremely skilful handling is obvious; but how the liquid could affect an impenetrable porcelain glaze so as to bring the dormant colour to life remains a mystery. One recalls the story of the Yi-hsing tea-pots in Hsiang's Album[1] which changed colour when filled with tea; and one is tempted to dismiss both stories as incredible. But what are we then to think of the Russian envoy, Ysbranti Ides,[2] who visited Peking in 1692 and wrote, among other things: "They have a kind of white china, excessively thin, with blue fishes painted on the metal between the coats of varnish, so that they are invisible except when the cup is full of liquor"? He does not actually claim to have seen a specimen, and perhaps he was only repeating a story which was current at the time. Possibly the tradition of this hidden decoration was in the minds of the potters when they made a ware with faint blue designs, which is represented by two or three specimens in the British Museum. It is a dead white and glassy porcelain, evidently a special composition, and the design, usually a dragon, is etched with a needle-point in the paste. A little cobalt was evidently dusted into the incisions and the porcelain glazed and fired in the usual manner. The result is a faint blue design as it were tattooed in the flesh of the vase. Incidentally these pieces bear the Ch'êng Hua mark, but they are probably not older than the Yung Chêng period; and it is interesting to observe that the earliest form of blue decoration on Staffordshire salt-glazed stoneware,[3] made not long after this period, was effected in a very similar manner.

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[1] *B.M. Guide*, Fig. 137.

[2] Bushell, *T'ao shuo*, p. 197.

There is one other colour used for painted decoration which is applied before glazing and, like the blue, developed in the high temperature of the porcelain kiln. This is the underglaze red derived from copper. More will be said of this colour in connection with the beautiful red glazes which were one of the glories of the K'ang Hsi period. Meanwhile we note that the copper red was used for pictorial designs, both alone and in company with underglaze blue. It was, however, a colour which seems to have given much trouble to the potters of all periods from the 15th century onwards. At one period, as in the reigns of Hsüan Tê and Ch'êng Hua, it was a striking success: at another it was abandoned in despair. It figures, though not conspicuously, on K'ang Hsi wares, but most of the Ch'ing specimens on which it has been developed with outstanding success will be found to belong rather to the succeeding reigns.

There are two distinct kinds of underglaze red painting, apparently the result of different methods of application. In one the red appears in sharp, clearly defined brush strokes like the pencilled blue, and in the other it is piled up in thick washes, which often have a palpable relief and even develop crackle. In the latter case it seems to be more of a glaze and, indeed, it assumes the character now of *sang de bœuf*, now of peach bloom.

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[1] *Wares of the Ming Dynasty*, p. 196.

[2] See p. 13, footnote.

[3] This is the so-called "scratched blue" salt glaze. See also p. 84.

The underglaze reds and blues are both effectively used in combination with celadon and lavender glazes, with or without a backing of white slip.[1] The celadon colour seems to have been particularly sympathetic to the copper red and some of the latter's most successful appearances are made under a pale celadon green glaze. But here again we are trenching on the Yung Chêng and Ch'ien Lung periods; and a description of this kind of porcelain must be reserved for another chapter. We can, however, refer the reader to a K'ang Hsi specimen on Plate 31, a beaker with beautiful design of rock and pheasant and flowering peony and magnolia, partly raised in relief and coloured with underglaze red and blue and passages of celadon green. The magnolia flowers at the top are relieved by surrounding washes of blue in a manner already described on page 16.

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[1] i.e. liquid clay.

CHAPTER III

FAMILLE VERTE PORCELAIN ENAMELLED ON THE BISCUIT

Next to the blue and white the most characteristic K'ang Hsi porcelain is what is known as *famille verte*. The green family gets its name from the predominance of greens of various shades in its colouring; but though the green dominates, it does not monopolise the colour scheme. It is, in fact, very well supported by yellow, violet-blue, aubergine purple, coral red and composite black.

Metallic oxides in small doses are the colouring agents in this palette—cobalt for the blue, copper for the green, manganese for the aubergine, iron for the red, and iron or antimony for the yellow; and in nearly every case they are mixed with a lead flux forming an easily fusible coloured glass. They are melted on to the porcelain surface at a low temperature in the muffle kiln (see p. 6), and appear, when cool, as brightly coloured but transparent enamels. The red is an exception in that it needs little or no fluxing material, but is applied as a pigment mixed with water and a little ox-glue to make it adhere. What glassy element it requires is drawn from the glaze itself. Another pigment used without flux is the dry brown or black (derived from manganese) which is employed for drawing outlines or making a backing for the composite black enamel. The latter is merely black pigment coated over with a transparent enamel, which is usually green but sometimes aubergine. On later wares a colourless wash of the fluxing material was sometimes used to coat the black pigment, or the pigment and the flux were actually mixed together, but the resultant colour was distinctly inferior to the green-black of the K'ang Hsi period.

The *famille verte* enamels are very similar to those used by the Ming potters in their "five colour" wares. They are composed on the same principles, but a few differences are observable in the results. The K'ang Hsi yellow is generally clearer and of a lighter tone than the Ming, there are new shades of green, among which a pale apple-green is noticeable, the red is lighter and thinner and of a more coral tint, and the violet-blue (only tentatively used on the late Ming wares) replaces the peculiar Ming turquoise-green. This violet-blue enamel, a singularly beautiful colour, is one of the features of the *famille verte*. The connoisseur looks to it specially in appraising a specimen, and if the blue is bright and clear the piece will be highly valued. A peculiarity of this enamel has frequently been noted, namely, that it seems to infect the white porcelain surrounding it with a curious oily stain which is lustrous like the track of oil on water. This " halo," as it is called, was doubtless due to some emanation from the blue; and as it does not always appear, we may assume that it was a defect for which a remedy was eventually found. But collectors are in no way distressed by its presence, as they have come to regard it as a sign of genuineness.

Those masterpieces of ceramic decoration, the K'ang Hsi polychromes, were made with this limited but choice palette of colours, sometimes embellished with touches of gilding. But there is no limit to the variety of effects obtained from them by the Chinese artists with the wide range of designs at their disposal. There are, however, two large groups which are distinguished by differences in technique and in general appearance. One of these may be called the porcelain with on-biscuit enamels and the other the porcelain with on-glaze enamels.

To deal first with the on-biscuit group, the term " biscuit," we must explain, is applied to the porcelain body baked in the kiln but not yet glazed. Though clear and white it has a mat surface which reflects little light. To this the enamels were applied in the following way. First the design was traced in outline in a dull brown-black pigment, every detail of the drawing being complete. The colours were then applied in broad washes of transparent enamel which allowed the design to appear distinctly while supplying it with the necessary tints. The whole *famille verte* palette rarely appears in the on-biscuit decoration which harks back to the Ming *san ts'ai* or three-colour scheme. Green, yellow, and aubergine form the usual combination and the white is supplied by an almost colourless wash which has a faint greenish tinge and a distinct lustre.[1] The composite black is also used, and more rarely the coral red and the violet-blue. But neither of these last two colours seems to have taken kindly to the biscuit ground and it was sometimes necessary to provide a special patch of porcelain glaze for their benefit, as on the pair of figures on Plate 11.

As a rule in this on-biscuit decoration the entire surface of the porcelain was covered; for the biscuit, if left exposed, was apt to become dirty and discoloured. The exception to this rule are the bases and other unessential areas of vessels and the fleshy parts of statuettes. The latter are often left in the raw biscuit state, but even so it was customary to lacquer them over with gilding which was applied on a red medium.

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[1] The lustre of this wash is compared by collectors with that of a snail's track. The wash is apparently the fluxing material of the enamels without any colouring oxide.

Both the gold and the underlying red disappeared with time, and to-day the lacquered parts are usually bare, though the enquiring eye will often find traces of the red and gold still remaining in cavities and wrinkles.

The general effect of the on-biscuit colours with their mat background is one of subdued splendour. The individual enamels are darker and softer than those of the on-glaze group, and the prevalence of the three-colour combination gives the ware a distinctive appearance. This style of decoration was used on porcelain of every shape and form, but it was specially suitable for statuettes and ornaments of complicated design, because the single enamel coating interfered less with the sharpness of the modelling than did the double coating of glaze and enamel. The glaze, indeed, if used as well as the enamels, was apt to flow thickly in the hollows of the model and to blunt the contours.

Porcelain with on-biscuit enamels was made in the Ming period, and uncritical persons have considered this sufficient reason for calling it indiscriminately Ming. Nothing could be more misleading, as fully ninety per cent of the existing specimens belong to the Manchu period. If, however, anyone is still suffering from delusions of this kind, fostered by unscientific books and sale catalogues, we cannot do better than refer him to the extremely interesting little ink slab[1] in the British Museum, a typical specimen of this much be-Minged ware, but dated in the year 1692. Further, the Dresden Collection, essentially K'ang Hsi and almost entirely formed after the year 1694—not to mention other historic collections of the same period—contains a large series of these wares; and the only reasonable proceeding is to regard them all as K'ang Hsi unless some special grounds can be shown for an earlier attribution.

This is a point which has been stressed before but must be insisted on, because nothing is harder to kill than an error which has been given such wide currency, and the on-biscuit porcelain is of great importance to collectors. It is, moreover, a very costly type, even if certain figures and groups belonging to it no longer command the exorbitant prices of ten years ago. They were unnaturally boomed and have suffered the inevitable slump. There is another matter for consideration, not unconnected with the boom and certainly part cause of the slump, and that is the fine crop of imitations which the unusual demand for this kind of ware has called into being. Both the Chinese and Japanese have proved themselves skilful copyists of this porcelain, and there are few severer tests for the expert to-day than those provided by the on-biscuit enamels. Some of the colours can be reproduced with disconcerting accuracy, and judicious "rubbing" will reduce the newness of the surface. The artificial dullness, however, is often overdone; and there is an ageing and mellowing of porcelain which only comes from time and there are genuine signs of wear which are difficult to counterfeit. The connoisseur knows how to look for these signs and also for that elusive virtue, style, which is rarely, if ever, attained by the modern copyist; but he must be careful not to be taken off his guard or be forced to hasty decisions.

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[1] See *B.M. Guide*, Fig. 87.

The general effect of this kind of decoration can be seen on Plates 1 and 3 to 10. The remarkable vase on Plate 1 (Frontispiece), modelled from a square bronze beaker with embattled edges, is decorated with a cleverly chosen design which holds the balance nicely between bronze and porcelain. The *shou* (longevity) character on the neck is appropriate to both, but the storks and the rock and wave border are more essentially ceramic. The imitation of bronze designs in porcelain was neither so frequent nor so exact in the K'ang Hsi as in the succeeding periods. The Ch'ien Lung purist would doubtless have kept rigidly to archaic bronze decoration for this beaker—with ogre heads on the bulb, stiff leaves on the neck, and dragon frets below.

A combination of bronze form and porcelain designs appears in the marriage cup on Plate 5 with butterflies and *shou* character in a dotted green ground. These interesting vessels played an important part in the Chinese wedding ceremony, the bride and bridegroom pledging themselves in their contents, and they are decorated with symbolic ornament. The archaic dragon which winds round the bowl and forms a handle is an emblem of fertility, the character *shou* (longevity) speaks for itself, and the butterfly doubles[1] the good wishes implied. Another marriage cup with lotus design on a yellow ground is shown on Plate 33. Two tea-pots on Plate 4 are well-known K'ang Hsi models. One has elaborate openwork panels on the sides, a type sometimes decorated in *famille noire* colours: the other is of the favourite bamboo pattern. Another tea-pot form, which figures among the *élite* of the on-biscuit porcelains, is the kettle shape illustrated by two rare specimens on Plates 34 and 35.

As already hinted there are many figures of animal, bird, and human forms decorated with the on-biscuit enamels which provided colour without seriously impairing the sharpness of the modelling. The two pairs of Chinese ladies and gentlemen in the Leonard Gow Collection shown on Plates 3 and 11 are exceptionally fine examples, and they have the added charm of representing typical Chinese individuals in simple, natural poses and dressed in the fashion of the time. The modelling in both cases is good, that of the smaller pair (Plate 3), with their lively gestures and infectious gaiety, unusually good. The lady here is carrying a small squirrel-like animal in her left hand, such as appears in the so-called "rat and vine pattern": the faces have a thin wash of greenish-white over the biscuit and there is a dry red pigment on the lady's lips and on the man's hat. Points to notice on the other pair (Plate 11) are the blue and red enamels which have been specially provided with pads of glaze; and the man's pigtail which seems to indicate that these figures were modelled at a time when the pigtail, enforced by the Manchu conquerors, had ceased to be a reproach.

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[1] See p. 134.

The K'ang Hsi figures are not all so attractive as these. Many of them are of a religious kind which had now become stereotyped. There are, of course, well-modelled figures of gods and demi-gods made at this time, but the bulk of them lack the strength and spontaneity of the Ming models and many of them are simply bizarre and grotesque. The animal figures of this period are more conspicuous for a certain grotesque humour than for truth to Nature. The horses are wooden as compared with those of the T'ang potters, and even such a rare specimen as the black horse with his green-robed rider on Plate 6 is more notable for its colouring than for the modelling. The Buddhist guardian lions belong to a different category. They are fanciful creatures modelled with a certain humorous ferocity. A fine pair is illustrated on Plate 10, the male with his habitual ball of brocade and the female with a cub. The colouring of this pair is a good example of enamelling on the biscuit. Smaller editions of these lions, made for the domestic altar, were fitted with tubes to hold incense sticks.

Some of the most pleasing models in the round are those of birds, such as the pair of parrots on Plate 5, with their gay plumage rendered in beautiful smooth enamels. The goose on Plate 33 and the black-plumaged bird on Plate 54 are other excellent specimens of good modelling, set off by the rare *famille noire* enamels.

Other interesting examples of this kind of decoration are the writer's box on Plate 35, and the lantern and square brush-pot on Plate 36, which also illustrate the skilful treatment of openwork of various kinds. The brush-pot bears the legend *wên chang shan tou* (composition lofty as the hills and the Great Bear) in characters reserved, one on each face, an appropriate inscription for a vessel destined to hold the weapons of a scholar and calligrapher.

The on-biscuit enamels reach their culminating point in those sumptuous porcelains the decoration of which is set in a ground of black, yellow, or green. Collectors like to segregate these into sub-families, such as *famille noire* and *famille jaune*, but of these only the *famille noire* is of sufficiently substantial size to justify a separate treatment. The *famille jaune* is quite a small one, and the collector would indeed be fortunate who had enough of the green-ground vases to form a family by themselves. It is not to be supposed for a moment that the *famille noire* porcelain is common. On the contrary, it is very difficult to find good specimens and the supply is so unequal to the demand that the cost of it is fabulous.

The feature of the *famille noire*, as its name implies, is the composite green-black enamel described on page 23, a brown-black pigment washed over with transparent green. The faint lustre which is rarely absent from the green enamel, particularly that of any considerable age, gives this black the soft greenish reflexions of a raven's wing; and it is difficult to imagine any more splendid setting for a floral design in green, yellow, aubergine and white. The shapes of the *famille noire* vases are worthy of the decoration. Whether ovoid, baluster, or beaker-shaped, club-shaped (*rouleau*), or square, covered jars or what not, they have the virtues of the best K‘ang Hsi potting, truth of form and elegance of line. The designs are of the usual kind—growing flowers and plants, dragons, etc., and occasionally figures and landscapes; but the most popular and the most attractive is undoubtedly that in which the central motive is the blossoming prunus tree with aubergine trunk, green foliage, and white blossoms which on a few rare specimens are picked out with red (see Plate 39). By the root of the tree is an ornamental rockery in two shades of green: a few bamboos and grasses grow near by; while bright-plumaged birds hovering in the branches, and perhaps a pair of rabbits at the foot of the tree, complete the picture. Yellow is sparingly used, but a few touches of it on the birds give the necessary sparkle to the colour scheme. On the square vases, groups of flowering plants representing the four seasons are effectively disposed, one on each panel—the peony for spring, lotus for summer, chrysanthemum for autumn, and prunus for winter—with their usual adjuncts of rockery, birds, and insects (Plate 7); and on the big covered jars or potiches the spacious design of pheasants or phœnixes on a rock amid flowering plants—tree peony, hydrangea, etc.—is attractively displayed. Very rarely the black ground is used to surround panel decoration.

The *famille noire* does not consist of vases and large pieces only. There are saucer dishes, bowls, ewers, drinking and libation cups, and innumerable other objects of use and ornament; and it even admitted to its select circle cups and saucers, tea-pots, and other objects intended for export to Europe.

The *famille noire* is amply illustrated. Plate B in the edition de luxe shows a magnificent beaker-shaped vase in the Leonard Gow Collection, of the form which the Chinese call *yen yen,* with the familiar but never stale design of flowering prunus, rockery and birds. The drawing of this beautiful subject is admirable: the gnarled trunk is artistically disposed and the blossoms though rendered with scrupulous care hang light and free. A square club-shaped vase in the same collection has the same theme no less finely rendered; and a pair of familiar vases in the Drucker Collection in the Rijks Museum, Amsterdam, are notable for their rare red-blossomed prunus and for their happy alternation of the design, the boughs ascending on one vase and descending on the other. Plate 7 shows how appropriately the flowers of the four seasons are used on these four-sided vases: the neck of this piece is varied with diaper patterns in which are propitious *ju-i* ornaments and medallions of archaic dragons. The elegant covered jar on Plate 6 is one of a pair belonging to Mr. Leonard Gow.

It will be observed that in the finer pieces where the black had to be applied in large areas, it is not permitted to appear in too solid masses. On the contrary, it is usually broken and graded in artistic fashion and full of life. This is conspicuously the case with the two noble vases shown on Plates B and 7, though the difficulty of reproducing the black ground has prevented the full effect appearing in the pictures.

The black enamel was used in the reigns which followed K'ang Hsi, but it underwent a change both in style and composition. The typical Ch'ien Lung black is closely diapered with floral scrolls in green or with brocade patterns in *famille rose* enamels, and one rarely sees the colour used in large areas as on the K'ang Hsi porcelain. We have noted, too, that in some of the later blacks the pigment was actually mixed with the enamel, which produced a more solid effect, and again a later black is formed of black pigment washed with the colourless "white" of the on-biscuit palette. But we shall refer to these later blacks again. There are, of course, frankly modern imitations of the K'ang Hsi *famille noire,* in which some of the colours are passably reproduced; but the black is always sticky and shines with an unnatural lustre quite different from the iridescence produced by age. Apart from their enamels even the best of these imitations lack the form and stylish potting of the old, and the ware exposed at the base betrays them at once. They should deceive no one. But there are other imitations, of quite another calibre, built up with an ingenuity worthy of a better cause. In these the ware exposed at the base no longer betrays the forger but conspires with him, for it is the base of a genuine K'ang Hsi vase. It may be that a new body has been built up on this foundation,[1] or that a less imposing decoration has been "skinned" off an old vase and the whole reclothed with enamels of a more costly type.

The work done by the redecorators of these pieces is highly skilled and no pains are spared to give the enamels the proper K'ang Hsi appearance; so that in the excitement of "making a discovery" an enthusiast may easily be carried away by such a specimen, where a critical eye will detect weakness and stiffness in the drawing,—for no modern imitator really succeeds in catching the freedom of the original—something suspicious about the colours and the inevitable signs of refiring on the base. If the piece has been subjected to the brutal process of skinning, a careful examination is almost bound to reveal lathe-marks or other incriminating signs, apart from the discoloration and black specks on the base caused by the refiring. But these deceits make the hazards of the game, and without them collecting would undoubtedly lose much of its zest.

What has been said of the *famille noire* applies almost verbatim to the *famille jaune* with the obvious difference that the green-black ground is replaced by yellow. Otherwise the technique is the same and the same forms and decorations appear, and the same set of forgers are busy trying to produce colourable imitations. Though smaller specimens with yellow ground are to be seen in most collections, the larger vases of this group are decidedly rarer than the *famille noire*. The Londoner is fortunate in having the Salting Collection (V. and A. Museum) where he can see several good examples, and the British Museum where there is at any rate one. The Port Sunlight Collection, which is very rich in *famille noire*, has also one or two good yellow-ground vases. In all these specimens the yellow varies considerably. On the British Museum vase it is distinctly muddy and brownish, while on others it is clear and of a transparent primrose tint. Doubtless this latter was the ideal aimed at, but success was rarely attained and more or less brown clouding is generally noticeable.

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[1] Very skilful work has been done in replacing necks, shoulders and even larger portions of broken vases both in China and in Paris. The replacements are done in porcelain and the joins are cleverly masked by the enamels. The collector will be on the watch for these repaired pieces

We are fortunate in being able to give a few excellent examples from the Leonard Gow Collection. There is nothing amiss with the mottled yellow ground of the handsome potiche on Plate 9, in which is displayed the well-known design of a rockery and pheasant, with flowering plants and trees. This design is probably of Sung origin[1] and it was a favourite with the K'ang Hsi decorators who used it impartially on blue and white and *famille verte* porcelains. The hexagonal covered vase on Plate 8 with similar design in a clear yellow ground evidently belonged to a set of five. The same form is seen in sets of *famille noire* vases and beakers. The yellow of the bowl on Plate 3 is almost perfect in its evenness and purity of tone; it surrounds a beautifully drawn design of cranes and lotus plants.

If we substitute transparent green for yellow in the above we have a description of the third and rarest of these sub-families. Large vases with green enamel grounds are excessively rare, and it would not take long to compile a complete list of those which are known.

Smaller objects of this group, such as bowls and table ware, are rather more frequently seen, but even these are difficult to obtain. There are several shades of green enamel, a dark leaf-green, a cucumber-green, pale apple-green and emerald. The last but one is a singularly beautiful ground colour. One of the best of the known green-ground vases, that in the Franks Collection (British Museum)[2], has a lovely prunus design on a mottled leaf-green ground. There are also notable examples in the Salting Collection, most of which have been already published[3].

No one has yet segregated an aubergine family, but this attractive colour is occasionally used for the background of small vases and ornaments. It is seen, for instance, on bowls, of which there is a beautiful pair in the Anthony de Rothschild Collection; and we are able to illustrate a rare example of a vase with bold dragon design in an aubergine ground from the Leonard Gow Collection (Plate 8). Another vase on the same Plate is one of a pair with lightly moulded leaf panels with yellow grounds: on the shoulders is a passage of reticulated green, the cracked ice pattern. The green ice pattern is sometimes effectively used as a background for panel decoration, as on a deep bowl in the Eumorfopoulos Collection which has the curious G mark.[4]

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[1] There are many repetitions of it in pictorial art, among which is a picture in the British Museum by the Ming painter Wang Yu.

[2] Figured *C.P.P.*, Plate 96.

[3] See Gorer and Blacker, *Chinese Porcelain and Hard Stones*, Plates 27, 28, 36, and 40.

[4] See p. 143.

CHAPTER IV

FAMILLE VERTE PORCELAIN ENAMELLED ON THE GLAZE

The second and larger group of *famille verte* porcelains is decorated with enamels applied over the glaze. The enamel colours are the same as those of the on-biscuit class, but the different method of application results in an appreciable difference in their appearance. Backed by the radiant foil of white glaze they shine clearer and brighter, and more play is made with the beautiful violet-blue and the coral red which are quite at home on the new medium. Nor is there any longer need to cover the porcelain completely, and the artist, who has now greater freedom for his brush, can build up a nicely balanced decoration in which the white ground has its proper share. There is undoubtedly more room for artistry here. The method of painting the *famille verte* designs is much the same as that employed on the blue and white. The picture is first outlined in red or brown and the colours are washed in with a full brush. The forms of the ware are also much the same and the designs are chosen from the same repertoire, though more use is made of birds and flowers and of certain brocade patterns which are particularly suited to coloured decoration.

Père d'Entrecolles tells us that the porcelain destined for enamel decoration was given a glaze in which there was less of the softening element (lime and fern ashes), a glaze stronger and more opaque than that used in the blue and white; and the collector will often have noticed that the glaze of some of the *famille verte* has a peculiarly warm and creamy tone. The second firing in the enamel kiln was liable to injure the softer glazes, and that is why the finer underglaze blue is rarely seen in combination with enamel colours. The old Ming method of using enamels and underglaze blue together was never abandoned by the Chinese, but it is rarely seen on the superior *famille verte* of the K'ang Hsi period. Nor was the combination any longer necessary, because the blue element was now efficiently supplied by the violet-blue enamel.

It is always interesting to read contemporary criticisms of the things which age has rendered almost sacrosanct; and the remarks of Père d'Entrecolles on the *famille verte* which he saw coming fresh from the kiln are well worth quoting. Writing in 1712 of the " porcelain painted with landscapes in a medley of almost all the colours heightened with gilding " he allows that they are very beautiful, if one pays a high price; but the ordinary wares of this kind are not, he says, to be compared with blue and white. And again, " sometimes the painting is intentionally reserved for the second firing; at other times they only use the second firing to conceal defects in the porcelain, applying the colours to faulty places. This porcelain, which is loaded with colours, is not to the taste of a good many people. As a rule one can feel the inequalities on the surface, whether due to the clumsiness of the workmen, to the exigences of light and shade, or to the desire to conceal defects in the body of the ware."

Most of us will agree with much of this criticism. We feel at times that the colour in certain pieces has very little point except to cover up a faulty surface, and there are, especially among the export *famille verte* wares, pieces which are obviously overloaded with a confused medley of designs. It is only the gay colouring of the enamels which commends this kind of porcelain for the decoration of our rooms. As to the inequalities of surface which displeased the worthy father's eye, no collector will admit that they are in any way defects in themselves, although they often suffer from the defects of their virtues. Nor are they due to clumsy workmanship or the desire to conceal flaws. The truth is the vitrifiable enamels cannot coalesce with the hard porcelain glaze; and as they contain only a tiny percentage of colouring matter, no depth of colour can be obtained without piling them on thickly. " Heaped and piled " is the old Ming expression for these enamels when liberally used; and so they often stand out like encrusted jewels on the surface of the ware. This condition makes for beauty and brilliancy; but, if the ware is submitted to rough usage, the outstanding enamel must inevitably suffer. In some cases it may even scale off: in others it is merely dulled by wear.

If the good specimens were only obtainable at a high price in 1712, we wonder what Père d'Entrecolles would think of the market to-day. Even the moderate pieces are difficult to find and costly to buy, much dearer as a rule than blue and white of equal quality; and the finer specimens, though not so highly priced as the on-biscuit wares, are only within reach of very long purses.

The dating of *famille verte* is not an exact science, but it is possible to trace a certain chronological sequence in the different types. In the early Ch'ing wares made for native use one observes a certain rugged strength of design and colour approximating to that of the Ming. The enamels are applied in broad washes: there are masses of dark green: less prominence is given to the violet-blue, and gilding is little used. The export wares of this period can be identified by their likeness to the blue and white of the Table Bay group (see p. 8). They are of the same crisp and much-moulded kind, with bands of petal-shaped compartments and foliations in low relief and corresponding depressions. Flowering plants fill these compartments which usually radiate from a central design of kylin and phœnix, graceful ladies, or landscape.

The zenith of the *famille verte* is reached in the second period which starts from the renaissance of 1680. To this period we may date the magnificent vases and dishes with panelled designs set out in richly brocaded grounds, and all the most sumptuous and costly types. This is the time when the greater part of the Dresden Collection was brought together by Augustus the Strong, a collection which remains the best training ground in the world for the student of K'ang Hsi porcelain. It is true that dated specimens are extremely rare, but there is one in the Hippisley Collection[1] with a cyclical date corresponding to 1703. It is a square, club-shaped vase finely painted with landscape subjects, clearly belonging to the highest class of *famille verte*.

Plates 12 to 18 illustrate specimens of *famille verte* of the best period. The splendid bowl with red-blossomed prunus on Plate 17 has in the interior a design of salmon leaping the falls in front of a building labelled *lung mên* (dragon gate), the significance of which is explained on page 125. Fig. 3 of Plate 16 is a square vase with scenes illustrating the Four Liberal Accomplishments (painting, writing, music, and checkers) on its four sides and *shou* (longevity) characters on the neck. On Plate 13 is a fine pair of vases of *yen yen* shape, the one with a martial subject probably taken from the *Shui hu Chuan* (stories of brigands in the reign of the Sung Emperor Hui Tsung), the other with a scene of civil pomp. They are the *wu p'ing* and *wên p'ing*, military and civil vases[2]. The glorious dish on Plate 15, with the attractive picture of the Court ladies picking lotuses in the Imperial presence at the Peking Lotus Festival, is a masterpiece of composition and colour.

Among the uncoloured illustrations Plates 40 and 45 show two delightful vases. One, from the A. de Rothschild Collection, with beautiful ovoid body and a finely spaced design in brilliant colours, has the unusual feature of a porcelain stand made with and attached to the vase. The other, from the Reginald Cory Collection, is club-shaped and painted in rather delicate shades of the *famille verte* enamels, which suggest a later period in the reign of K'ang Hsi. These vases are typical of two of the choicer kinds of *famille verte* decoration, in which large birds and large ladies respectively are the centres of attraction. There are good examples of both these types in the Dresden Collection. A domestic scene with ladies and children is delightfully rendered on a large dish (Plate 41) in the Gaspard Farrer Collection, which, apart from its fine workmanship, has many interesting details such as the big fish-bowl full of fishes, the parrot swinging on a perch and the portentous spider's web which seems to be regarded with interest rather than disgust by the ladies of the house. The ewer on Plate 42 and the bottle and goblet on Plate 43, conspicuous for the jewel-like quality of the enamels, belong to the better class of export wares. All these specimens illustrate the effect of fine drawing and colouring offset by the white porcelain ground.

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[1] Figured *C.P.P.*, Plate 104.

[2] See p. 121.

The other examples are of the " brocaded " type, in which the pictorial designs are confined to panels set in grounds of rich brocade patterns. Plate 12 illustrates one of a pair of magnificent *rouleau* vases in the R. T. Woodman Collection, which show this class of ware at its best. The purity and lustre of the enamels, the large panels with favourite subjects—landscape with animals and birds, rockery and flowering plants, etc.—finely drawn, and the surrounds of lovely green and yellow brocade combine to produce a sumptuous effect. The *kuan-yin* vase on Plate D (édition de luxe) is not less brilliant, and here, too, the size of the panels is a distinctive feature of the decoration. In the two vases of square and round club-shape on Plate 16 the brocade ground plays a larger part, and the panels are small though numerous and fancifully formed in fan, leaf, peach, pomegranate, and other shapes. The brocades are usually of a delicate shade of pale green diapered with dots or small circles—from which they have got the not very elegant names of frog-spawn and fish-roe patterns—and they are strewn with small ornaments, usually blossoms and butterflies, but sometimes, as on Fig. 2, with vases and symbols taken from the Hundred Antiques.[1] The pair of splendid covered jars on Plates 14 and 14A, decorated in the same style, are conspicuous for their fine violet-blue enamel. Incidentally, Plate 14 illustrates a favourite design of the Chinese decorator, the large basket of flowers which fills the centre of many beautiful *famille verte* dishes. A little underglaze blue appears on the knobs of the covers and in the border rings. Other brocade patterns are seen on the pair of covered scrap-bowls on Plate 18 with a design of peony scrolls and flying phœnixes : on the fine flower-pot on Plate 42, and on the dish on Plate 43. The last, with its green water and crested waves, in which are sea horses, fishes, symbols, and floating prunus blossoms, is one of those patterns which are everlastingly be-Minged because they occasionally occur on late Ming porcelain. Here we have it on a typical K'ang Hsi dish, with the leaf-symbol mark and the wide grooved foot-rim, both of which are characteristic of the period.

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[1] See p. 136.

A small group of brocaded porcelain is distinguished by the use of coral red as a ground colour, in which floral scrolls are reserved and either left white or touched with colour. Plate 19 illustrates a pair of bottle-shaped vases and a slender ovoid covered jar with panels of flowering plants and *po ku* emblems enclosed by coral brocade; and on Plate C (édition de luxe) is a pair of cylindrical covered jars with rose and ticket[1] pattern in a coral ground. Occasionally the diapered red covers the entire surface of a vase, but this massive use of the colour is rather overpowering and it is usually relieved by bands or lambrequins of green brocade, as seen in our illustrations.

Finally, in the third period which apparently dates from the last years of K'ang Hsi, we find a delicacy of treatment quite foreign to the virile *famille verte* of the early stages. The painting is miniature-like and the colours delicate and refined and applied with mechanical precision. It is the style of the *famille rose*, but expressed in the transparent enamels of the green family; and the effect is dainty in the extreme, if rather effeminate. Typical examples of this class are the well-known "birthday" plates (Plates 46 and 47) of beautiful eggshell porcelain with a finely painted floral design in the middle and the Imperial birthday greeting (a myriad longevities without ending!) in the border. They are reputed to have been made for the sixtieth birthday of the Emperor, which fell in 1713; but there is no foundation for this picturesque story, and the plates would have done equally well on any other birthday anniversary. It is more probable that this type of ware, of which other specimens will be described later, belongs to the extreme end of the K'ang Hsi and continued into the Yung Chêng and even into the Ch'ien Lung period (Plate 63). The same style of painting will be recognised in mixed enamels on some of the finer porcelains of these later reigns.

A pair of rare eggshell porcelain lanterns in the A. de Rothschild Collection (Plate 46) belong to the later part of the reign, if we can judge from the delicacy of the colouring; though one can hardly imagine porcelain like this, which is almost as thin as paper, being decorated with enamels of greater weight. Mr. Harvey Hadden's dish (Plate 48, Fig. 2) has the same form and the same fine potting as the birthday plates and, like them, the K‘ang Hsi mark; but it is painted with a larger brush. The beautiful lotus, with its broad leaf and full blossoms, is superbly rendered in smooth, sleek enamels, and apparently by the artist who painted some of the choicest specimens in the Dresden Collection.[1]

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[1] See p. 15.

We must assign to the same late period of the reign the dainty flask-shaped bottle (Plate 47, Fig. 1) in the Levy Collection. The potting of this piece is very good and the two archaic dragons which form the handles are modelled with spirit: the medallions on either face are painted with the miniature-like touches and the delicate enamels of the birthday plates, the subjects being landscape with a mythical monster (*hai shou*) on one side and a pair of deer, a pair of birds and *ling chih* fungus on the other. On the border is a brocade pattern with soft apple-green ground powdered with dots.

The *famille verte*, however, had now run its course, and, like the K‘ang Hsi blue and white, it gave way before the growing popularity of the *famille rose*. But, like the blue and white, it was never wholly abandoned; and we see occasional instances of the old colouring on shapes which are fully a century later than K‘ang Hsi. Symptoms of the change of fashion, however, are apparent in the later wares of the K‘ang Hsi period. The rose-pink—at first a rather muddy mauve-pink—appears in the second decade of the 18th century and it is followed by a few other opaque enamels, timidly at first but with increasing persistence. One of the colours which was important to the *famille rose* palette, because it was used for blending, seems to have been known at Ching-tê Chên as early as 1712.[2] This is the arsenical white, an opaque enamel, very effectively used on the greenish-white porcelain ground. But the real period of transition is the reign of Yung Chêng and we shall return later to the development of the *famille rose*.

In their search for variety the K‘ang Hsi potters tried the effect of *famille verte* enamels over other glazes besides the white. We see them, for instance, on a *lang yao* green glaze on a bowl in the British Museum. This particular green will be discussed later; but if, as one suspects, it was an accidental colour which came from misfiring a red glaze, we can understand that the enamels were used here to disguise a faulty specimen. We suspect, too, the same intention in the case of some of the powder-blue pieces which have been treated to decoration in *famille verte* colours; but there are cases in which no such ulterior motive can be discerned, and here we have to recognise a *bona-fide* decoration even if we cannot regard it as a success. The brilliant powder-blue is not a suitable background for the transparent enamels, which are in fact completely eclipsed by it. The pale grey crackle and the light Nanking yellow glazes proved much more amenable; but they are not comparable with the white glaze for giving value to the enamels.

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[1] See Zimmermann, *op. cit.*, Plate 108.

[2] It is described by Père d’Entrecolles. See Bushell, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

As already hinted, the traditions of the late Ming " five colour " ware had not been entirely abandoned, and we still find the *famille verte* enamels combined with underglaze blue. The defect of this kind of decoration lay in the difficulty of refiring the ware in the enamel kiln without compromising the blue; and so we rarely find the potters risking their best blue on wares of this type. Père d'Entrecolles warns us that defective specimens of blue and white were sometimes camouflaged with enamelled designs, but these should be readily recognised because the blue designs will be complete in themselves and the colouring obviously a second thought. In the true " five-colour " scheme the blue forms only a part of the design. This is well seen in the few unfinished pieces which accident has preserved for our edification. In such we find figures or flowers faintly outlined and partly filled in with blue, the remainder evidently waiting for finishing touches in enamel. The designs on this kind of ware are generally in Ming style; but there is one large and interesting group in which this technique is used to express designs of another kind. This is the Chinese " Imari."

To explain this hybrid ware we must make a brief digression. The Japanese after many efforts succeeded in making a good porcelain in the 17th century. Suitable materials were found in the district of Arita, in the province of Hizen, and when the Dutch, who had been allowed to establish a settlement on the Island of Deshima, visited the Nagasaki fair in 1662 they found a native porcelain on sale which promised to be a profitable article of trade in Europe. It was a fine white ware, sparingly but tastefully decorated in pale blue, green, yellow, and soft Indian red enamels in a style which still bears the name of its reputed originator, Kakiemon. This Kakiemon ware met with considerable success in Europe and we find frequent references to it as " Old Japan " and " première sorte colorieé " in the 18th-century catalogues. It was, moreover, freely copied by European potters and porcelain makers. But the Dutch traders did not altogether approve of its quiet, reserved designs, and the story goes that one of their number suggested to the Japanese a more complex style based on brocade patterns. At any rate another type of ware was forthcoming which was shipped in quantities to Europe and enjoyed in the West a popularity never realised in Japan. This second type is distinguished as "old Imari," Imari being the port of Arita, and it is a rather coarse, greyish porcelain, heavily decorated with masses of dark, impure underglaze blue which is supplemented by red and gold and enamels. The designs are mostly irregular and rather confused, asymmetrical panels surrounded by mixed brocade patterns and containing figures, phœnixes, lions, sketchy landscapes or baskets of flowers, half Chinese and half Japanese in style. But for all its extravagance and crudeness this porcelain with its masses of dark blue, red and gold has considerable decorative value, and if we may judge from numerous specimens in the Dresden and other old collections, it found willing purchasers in Europe. The Japanese themselves, though they had no liking for the coarse export types, devised a modified scheme of decoration on similar lines, in which the Imperial devices, the chrysanthemum and the *kiri*, played a prominent part, and they seem to have continued to make this kind of ware to the present day.

Such was the demand for the Japanese goods that the Chinese at Ching-tê Chên were forced to meet the competition by imitating the work of their rivals. Both types, the Kakiemon and the old Imari, were closely copied by the Chinese, and it is a common occurrence to see the Chinese "Imari" offered for sale to-day as Japanese. The connoisseur, however, will detect certain differences. The Chinese porcelain is thinner and crisper: it has a smooth, oily glaze of greenish tinge and is usually slightly browned at the edge of the foot-rim. The Japanese is white or greyish, heavier, and usually coarser, with a "musliny" texture of glaze (due to quantities of tiny air bubbles), and the plates and dishes usually have a few spur marks beneath the imprint of the little supports on which the vessel rested in the kiln. The Chinese underglaze blue is clearer and purer, and, even if not of the finest blue-and-white quality, it is greatly superior to the dull Japanese colour: the soft Indian red and the thick sealing-wax red of the Japanese are both easily distinguished from the coral tint of the Chinese; and if black is used, as it is occasionally on the Imari wares, it is a brown-black in contrast with the green-black of the Chinese.

The bulk of the Chinese Imari dates from the last half of the K'ang Hsi period, but the manufacture continued into the succeeding reign. Indeed, we find references in the list[1] of wares made at the Imperial factory in the Yung Chêng period to gilt and silvered porcelains

[1] See p. 63.

"copying the Japanese," which may perhaps be an allusion to the Imari types.

There is another large but not very aristocratic family of porcelains which appears to be an offshoot of the Chinese Imari. It is decorated in red and gold and underglaze blue, but, though the colouring and general style resembles the Imari, the designs have no suggestion of Japanese origin. This "red-and-blue family" is evidently an export type and it consists mainly of plates, dishes, jugs, shaving bowls and other articles of domestic use. It has a certain decorative value, but it rarely, if ever, rises to the status of cabinet porcelain. The date of its manufacture is the first half of the 18th century.

CHAPTER V

K'ANG HSI MONOCHROME PORCELAIN

If glaze is *la qualité maîtresse de la céramique,* Chinese monochromes should be the rage among collectors. In this kind of porcelain the Chinese are supreme and unchallenged. They excelled in the early days of the Sung period, and in the Ch'ing dynasty they were masters of such a range of coloured glazes that the mere enumeration of them is a formidable task. But enthusiastic collectors of monochromes have always been very scarce in England. It may be that the colours do not show to their full advantage under our grey skies and that we need more play of light and shade, but for ten pieces of blue and white or *famille verte* in English collections you will scarcely find one monochrome. The French, on the other hand, have always taken pleasure in them. In the 18th century they delighted to use them for decorating their luxurious rooms; and to bring them into harmony with their surroundings, they commissioned first-rate artists like Gouthière and Caffieri to mount them in extravagant ormolu. Dark blue,[1] sky blue, turquoise, celadon, *rouge flambé,* and *truitée* (crackle) glazes appear repeatedly in the old French catalogues and in the notebooks of French ormolu makers; and the names of arbiters of taste such as Madame de Pompadour are found among their purchasers.

It was genuine appreciation of their colours that prompted the French to fit the monochrome porcelains with fine rococo mounts; but the collector of porcelain, as distinct from the lover of ornamental furniture, regards it to-day as a doubtful compliment, and he would prefer to enjoy the form and colour of the ware undisturbed by the vagaries of the ormolu.

But nowhere have the monochromes found such whole-hearted devotees as in the United States. Many collectors there demand nothing else, and as they are prepared to pay incredible prices for the objects of their desire, the tendency is for the choicer specimens to cross the Atlantic, and one regrets in preparing a book like this that it is not possible to draw on American cabinets for coloured illustrations.

The best period for the Ch'ing monochromes is between 1680 and 1750, the time when Ts'ang, Nien, and T'ang were directors of the Imperial factory; and though we shall attempt to treat the wares of the K'ang Hsi,

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[1] The name of Cardinal Mazarin is so closely associated with one kind of blue monochrome that the word mazarine has passed current in our language for blue.

Yung Chêng, and Ch'ien Lung periods under separate headings, it will be realised that many of the coloured glazes are common to all three reigns and that it is often extremely difficult to differentiate them. In this delicate task of differentiation the connoisseur must depend largely on his sense of style and his power to recognise the K'ang Hsi forms and the finish of the K'ang Hsi potting from those of the succeeding periods.

Inheriting the traditions of the Ming potters the K'ang Hsi manufacturers started with a large variety of single-colour glazes, and besides ringing the changes on these they were able to add many new or improved types of their own.

The first to be considered is obviously the white. White is the colour prescribed for use at the Court during periods of mourning, and as such periods were prolonged in China and Court usage was doubtless followed by fashionable people, the demand for white ware on this score alone must have been considerable. White was also the colour used in the worship of the Year-Star. But the demand for white wares was not dependent on ceremonial usage only. Their simple elegance makes a very general appeal.

The white monochromes are not mere undecorated porcelain. Having no gay colours to distract the eye from possible defects of form and surface they had to be fashioned with particular care. Perfect shape and flawless glaze were demanded; and we read without surprise that special supplies of fine clay and stone were reserved for the white porcelain. The finer wares are of eggshell thinness, the body being pared down on the lathe till it is almost non-existent and the vessel seems to be held together by the glaze alone. The Chinese give this thin porcelain the expressive name of *t'o t'ai* (bodiless), and they also recognise a slightly stouter variety under the name of "half bodiless." Père d'Entrecolles,[1] writing in 1722, alludes to the recent manufacture of porcelain for the Emperor so thin and delicate that it had to be placed on cotton-wool for fear of damage, and, as it was not safe to hold it and dip it in the glaze, the glaze had to be blown on to it.

There were many ways of decorating the white ware without destroying its character. There were the *an hua*, or secret decorations, so much exploited by the Ming potters. These included traceries of liquid white clay or gypsum, incised, engraved or moulded designs, all of which were covered over by the glaze and were generally seen to the best advantage by transmitted light. The incised designs were sometimes traced with a needle point in the soft body of the ware; or on the stouter pieces the decoration was outlined with a point and then carved round the edges so as to give it slight relief. In the commoner specimens a floral pattern—a chrysanthemum or lotus flower—was boldly cut in the paste and showed clearly through the glaze. Dishes, cups and saucers, and other table ware destined for Europe were sometimes decorated in this fashion; and they have been treated with scant respect by the European decorators who have covered them with enamelled designs.

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[1] Bushell, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

Another method of decoration was piercing *à jour*, often in fretwork of astonishing delicacy. This *kuei kung* or devil's work (the Chinese name is a tribute to the superhuman skill of the potters who executed it) is another survival of Ming technique. It was sometimes combined with carving, the porcelain body being treated like a piece of ivory. If the vessel was intended to hold liquid, it was fitted with a solid core and the piercing appeared only on the outer shell, or may be it was given a metal lining. Such *tours de force* as these were not confined to the white wares and we find the delicate fretwork often coloured with enamels, on the biscuit or otherwise. Occasionally, too, the potters showed their extraordinary manipulative skill by fitting a revolving belt to the waist of a vase or free working rings and chains with loose links to the handles.

Low reliefs were sometimes built up on the white wares by shavings of clay worked up with a wet brush. These were usually left free of glaze, as were the high reliefs which were modelled separately and luted on to the ware with liquid clay. On the other hand, the white ware is sometimes encrusted with glazed flowers in applied relief, but this decoration is less common on K‘ang Hsi wares than on those of later date.

White ware entirely free of glaze (biscuit, as it is generally called) does not seem to have been as much in fashion with the Chinese as it was with the European porcelain makers; but, if we do not meet with ambitious statuettes like those made of the beautiful *biscuit de Sèvres*, we do occasionally see small figures of Buddhist Arhats and lions in this material. There are several in the British Museum and curiously enough they are all stamped with the names of potters (Chiang Ming-kao and Ch‘ên Kuo-chih[1]) which in itself is a rare occurrence on Chinese porcelain. Biscuit porcelain is quaintly named *fan tz‘ŭ* (turned porcelain) by the Chinese, as though it were porcelain turned inside out. A touch of glaze on some inner part of the piece helps to keep up this illusion.

Nor must we forget the exquisite cream white ware which is a descendant of the old Sung Ting ware and is actually known as *fên ting* of the Ch'ing dynasty. It has an opaque earthy-looking body, like that of the " steatitic " porcelain[1] but apparently made with a special ingredient called *ch'ing tien* stone ; and its glaze is soft-looking, creamy, and usually crackled. Like the "steatitic" it was evidently an expensive ware and only used on fine, ornamental objects mostly of small size such as snuff-bottles, vases for a single flower and the implements of the scholar's writing-table. Ware of the same kind in imitation of the Sung Ting yao was made with success in the 16th century, and it will often be difficult to distinguish the Ming and Ch'ing pieces when they have, as is commonly the case, archaic form and ornament based on old Sung models. It would be difficult to imagine anything more dainty than the finer wares of this class made in the K'ang Hsi, Yung Chêng and Ch'ien Lung periods ; but they are rare to-day and extremely costly.

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[1] See p. 147.

The fine quality of the white porcelain is seen on a bottle on Plate 49 and another on Plate 50 : the form and finish in both cases are up to the best standard. Fig. 2 of Plate 49 is a specimen of the creamy Ting type with earthy body and faintly crackled glaze, but it is almost certainly a Ch'ien Lung piece ; and Fig. 1 of Plate 51 which probably belongs to the same period is an exquisite specimen of one of the special types, an eggshell porcelain highly transparent but with a pearly white glaze with undulating " orange peel " surface and irregular crackle stained red.

In passing to the coloured glazes we should explain that a few only of the colours are developed like the white glaze in the full heat of the porcelain kiln. Others, the lead silicates, can only be fired in the temperate parts of the kiln and these are added to a body already " biscuited." There are, thus, two groups, the " high fired " and " medium fired " glazes or, as the French term them, glazes of the *grand feu* and *demi-grand feu*. Beside these there are numerous enamels, which were used as glazes, and fired in the muffle kiln. These may be called enamel-glazes or glazes of the *petit feu*. The great variety of colours in the Chinese monochromes is obtained from a few metallic oxides and we shall group our classification round these.

Cobalt supplied the numerous shades of blue—dark blue (*ta ch'ing*) and deep sky blue (*chi ch'ing*), pale sky blue, slaty blue, dark and light lavender blue and the palest *clair de lune* or " moon white " (*yüeh pai*). They vary in depth and tint with the quantity and quality of the cobalt ingredient which in all these cases is mixed with a high-fired, felspathic glaze.

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[1] See p. 18.

Another type of blue glaze is manufactured by a different method, the cobalt being sponged or painted on to the body of the ware or sprayed on in a dry powder and the glaze added as in the case of the " blue and white." Here the blue is not incorporated with the glaze but lies in a distinct layer on the body with the depths of the clear glaze above it. The blue so applied was occasionally ornamented with designs traced with a needle point which removed the particles of blue exposing the white body beneath. Père d'Entrecolles makes allusion to this kind of decoration.[1] He also describes in his letter of 1722 the process by which the blue was sprayed on to the ware in a dry powder : " as for the *soufflé* blue called *tsoui tsim* (*ch'ui ch'ing*), the finest blue, prepared in the manner which I have described, is used. This is blown on to the vase, and when it is dry the ordinary glaze is applied either alone or mixed with *tsoui yeou* (*sui yu*)[2], if crackle is required." Elsewhere he explains how the Chinese surrounded the ware with paper during the blowing process, so as to catch and save any of the precious powder which missed its mark. The powder was in fact blown through gauze stretched over the end of a bamboo tube. It settled on the surface of the ware in a cloud of tiny specks, which formed when fired luminous points of blue. The glaze, being a " still " one, disturbed very little the grains of colour which retained their powdery formation. The powder-blue thus produced is the most brilliant of all the blue ground colours, and unlike most other coloured glazes it loses little of its brilliancy in artificial light. As a monochrome it is a trifle overpowering on large areas, and in recognition of this the Chinese almost always broke up the mass of blue with traceries of gilding ; but it was more extensively used as a background for panel decoration. The panels were masked by paper while the powder was blown on, and afterwards they were painted either in underglaze blue and red or in *famille verte* enamels on the finished glaze. The gilt traceries were generally added to the blue when it surrounded panels of *famille verte* decoration, but not so often when the panels were decorated in blue and white. Silver was occasionally used in place of gold on the powder-blue ground.

The *T'ao lu*[3] speaks of the *ch'ui ch'ing* as one of the specialities of Ts'ang's directorate, and it certainly does not seem to antedate the K'ang Hsi period. White glaze, however, was applied by a similar method of blowing on some of the Ming wares, and it is possible that blue glazes may have also been so applied. Some of the Chia Ching blue monochromes have a texture which suggests treatment of this kind, but in this case the blue is incorporated in the glazing material and so has quite a different appearance to that of the K'ang Hsi powder-blue.[1] But once established, the powder-blue continued in use. There are good specimens of Yung Chêng date, and it is made even at the present day; but the K'ang Hsi powder-blue, like the K'ang Hsi blue and white, excels all the later makes, and collectors esteem it among the most precious of the Chinese wares. There are dark and light shades, which appeal to different tastes, but both are admirable if the blue is of good quality.

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[1] Bushell, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

[2] *Sui yu* (crackle glaze) is mixed with the various coloured glazes to produce crackle (see p. 58) ; but we cannot recall an example of powder-blue crackle.

[3] Julien, p. 107.

Powder-blue has many admirers in this country and there are some truly remarkable collections of it. Mr. J. B. Joel has several hundreds of pieces of all kinds, shapes and sizes, including some of the finest imaginable quality and some of unusual size such as a tall *yen yen* vase, with panels of underglaze blue, which must be nearly 30 in. high. One room in the Lady Lever Art Gallery contains four large cabinets of powder-blue; and Mr. Leonard Gow has a considerable number of picked specimens, some of which may be seen on Plate 20 and on Plate E (édition de luxe). A fair idea of the colour and its powdery texture may be obtained from these: but it is well-nigh impossible to reproduce the gem-like brilliancy of these fine blues and the subtle varieties of their tones. All of these examples have panels painted in *famille verte* enamels in a style worthy of the importance of the vases. A rare use of the powder-blue to supplement enamelled decoration is seen in Fig. 2 of Plate 53; and in the Lady Lever Art Gallery there is a pair of rouleau vases with panels of powder-blue set among *famille verte* designs, reversing the usual procedure.

Ceramic nomenclature is notoriously perverse and for some unexplained reason the term "mazarin blue" has attached itself to the powder-blue. Cardinal Mazarin died in 1661, and though he doubtless had a weakness for blue-glazed porcelain, it can hardly have been for the powder variety.

There is a cobalt blue among the medium-fired lead-silicate glazes which is found on K'ang Hsi porcelain. It is a dark violet tint and like all the lead-silicate glazes it is apt to be covered with a fine and scarcely perceptible crackle. The beautiful turquoise-blue is another medium-fired glaze, but as it is derived from copper and not cobalt, it belongs to another category.

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[1] There are, however, a few specimens of late Ming porcelain on which a rudimentary type of powder-blue appears. It is in large and irregular grains which might have been dusted on with a sponge.

Manganese which is found in the same mineral formation as the cobalt (i.e. cobaltiferous ore of manganese) is the basis of the violet-purple and brownish-purple of aubergine glazes and enamels. As glazes these colours are medium-fired and used in monochrome or combined with other colours such as turquoise, yellow and green. The turquoise and violet-purple combination has been a favourite one since the Ming period. The violet-purple glaze is thick and somewhat opaque and full of those minute points of colour which suggest that it was blown on to the ware. The aubergine brown is thinner and more lustrous and transparent: but both are often minutely crackled. The cobaltiferous manganese also plays a part in the black glazes which belong to the next category.

Oxide of iron is one of the oldest and most prolific colouring agents used by the Chinese. Many clays contain a considerable percentage of iron, and these when fired by the potter burn to a reddish or brownish colour and even to a black. A little ferruginous clay mixed with the felspathic glaze produced the beautiful celadon green glaze in which the Sung potters excelled. The same recipe was used from early times at Ching-tê Chên, and Père d'Entrecolles[1] in 1722 alludes to the celadon as still popular: "I was shown this year for the first time a kind of porcelain which is now in fashion; its colour verges on olive and they call it *long tsiven*."

Many beautiful celadon monochromes were made in the K'ang Hsi, Yung Chêng and Ch'ien Lung periods. Their colour does not greatly differ from that of the old Lung-ch'üan ware, but the glaze is thinner and the white porcelain body of Ching-tê Chên is readily distinguished from the greyish, brown-edged Sung wares; further, they often have a reign-mark in underglaze blue (Plate 50). But the celadon glaze was not used as a monochrome only by the Ch'ing potters. It was often locally applied in combination with underglaze red and blue decoration (Plate 31, Fig. 2), or with buff and brown glazes. Blue under a celadon glaze has a dull, blackish appearance, but the underglaze red, covered by a pale celadon, often developed its most attractive tints. Celadon was a favourite with the 18th-century French connoisseurs, and many choice specimens are still to be found with elaborate ormolu mounts added by the Parisian artists of that period. Père d'Entrecolles adds that crackled celadon was made with the usual prescription—the addition of *sui yu* or crackled glaze; and we are all familiar with the vases of greyish-green crackle broken by bands of iron-coloured brown biscuit and furnished with lion-mask handles and rings. They were made with the *sui yu*, but very few of them are as old as the letters of Père d'Entrecolles.

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[1] Bushell, *op. cit.*, p. 214. *Long tsiven* is a rendering of Lung-ch'üan, the district celebrated for celadons in the Sung and Ming periods. In another place D'Entrecolles describes the making up of celadons in the Sung style with intent to deceive.

There is a host of grey, buff, and brown glazes, mostly crackled, which derive their colour from small doses of iron or ferruginous clay. They are closely allied to the celadons and, like them, high-fired. The most distinctive of these is the large family of lustrous browns, known as *tzŭ chin* (brown-gold) by the Chinese. These vary from olive-brown and dark coffee-brown to the pale golden brown or Nanking yellow, and they are sometimes crackled. The *tzŭ chin* glaze appears, like the powder-blue, both as a monochrome and as a ground for panel decoration, the panels being painted either in underglaze blue or enamel colours. This panelled brown ware goes by the name of Batavian, because it was largely imported by the Dutch who had an entrepôt at Batavia in Java. The panel decoration is often in *famille rose* colours of the transition period. Sometimes, too, the brown is used on the exterior of bowls and cups which have blue and white or enamelled designs inside; and in a few cases a brown ground is decorated in silver, a process which is incorrectly stated to have been new in the Yung Chêng period.[1] Existing specimens hardly do justice to the silvered decoration, as the metal turns black in course of time.

The paler shades of the lustrous brown glaze are often laid over designs engraved in the paste, and we have already noted that the Nanking yellow was used occasionally as a ground for *famille verte* decoration. Occasionally, too, these glazes are variegated as on two rare vases in the Peters Collection in New York, of which one has a coffee-brown glaze shading into olive-brown mottled with black and the other an olive-brown glaze with large patches of dark coffee-brown.

The *wu chin* (black-gold) glaze is an offshoot of the same family. It is formed by mixing a little cobaltiferous ore of manganese with the coffee-brown. It is a hard, high-fired glaze with a lustrous black surface showing bluish or brownish reflexions and it is universally known as mirror black (Plate 24). Though distantly related to the thick lustrous brown-black glazes of the Chien and other Sung wares, the actual mirror black seems to have been a K'ang Hsi innovation. Père d'Entrecolles says that it was only perfected after many failures and he is probably correct in the dating of this glaze, though he is apt to claim recent invention for many processes which we now know to have been in use in the Ming dynasty. The coffee-brown, *tzŭ chin*, glaze is a case in point.

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[1] See p. 72. It may have been first used at the Imperial factory in this reign; but it certainly appears on other wares in the K'ang Hsi period, for Père d'Entrecolles describes it in one of his letters.

Scherzer's valuable note (see p. xxv) discloses part of the secret of the Chinese success with these high-fired monochromes. The dark blue, the celadon, the lustrous brown, and the mirror-black glazes were applied in numerous coatings. In some cases as many as nine different coats of colour were given to secure the requisite density and smoothness, six by blowing and three by painting with a brush.

Choice specimens of the beautiful mirror black with soft brownish reflexions are rare and costly. Like the powder-blue it was usually relieved by gilt traceries, but the gilding in all such cases was apt to wear off in time leaving behind nothing but faint oily lines which are only visible when the piece is held obliquely to the light. It is a common occurrence to find that the gilding on both powder-blue and mirror black has been retouched in modern times. Another variety of the mirror black is a thick lacquer-like glaze, softer looking and less lustrous and usually showing signs of faint crackle. This is of later date and probably not earlier than Ch'ien Lung.

Père d'Entrecolles mentions the use of a mirror black to decorate panels reserved in a brown glaze. We cannot recall any specimen of this type, but there is a triple gourd vase in the Lady Lever Art Gallery which has one bulb glazed with mirror black and another decorated with *famille verte* enamels on a white glaze, and there are rare examples in which panels of enamelled decoration are reserved in a mirror-black ground.

Another colour in which iron plays a part is yellow. The Nanking yellow, of which we have spoken already, is a pale variety of the high-fired *tzŭ chin* glaze and it would generally be regarded as a golden-brown rather than a yellow, though there are cases in which it approaches the latter colour more nearly. But the typical monochrome yellow of this period is one of the medium-fired lead-silicate glazes, which with aubergine and leaf green make up the *san ts'ai* or three colours proper. All these are used as monochromes on Imperial porcelains, but a full yolk-of-egg yellow is more especially the Imperial colour. When applied direct to the biscuit the yellow glaze has a darker and browner tone : when applied over the white glaze it is paler and clearer. Engraved designs are often used under the yellow as under the aubergine and green glazes ; and on the Imperial pieces they generally consist of five-clawed dragons pursuing pearls. The *T'ao lu* mentions two types of yellow as specialities of the régime of Ts'ang Ying-hsüan. One, the *shan yü huang* (eel yellow), is probably the brownish-yellow glaze applied to the biscuit; the other, *huang pan tien* (spotted yellow), is more intriguing. Bushell has identified it with the mottled green, yellow and aubergine which is variously known as " tiger skin " and " egg and spinach," and this motley was in fact used on Imperial porcelains, such as the dish in the Salting Collection on which it covers engraved Imperial dragons.[1] Brinkley, on the other hand, describes it as a " stoneware with olive-green and yellow speckles " : it must be confessed that the expression is sufficiently vague to cover a variety of mottled glazes in which yellow plays a part, such, for instance, as a rare vase in the Peters Collection (New York), which has a minutely crackled brownish-yellow glaze clouded with dark olive in markings like those of a tortoiseshell, or a small covered pot in the Franks Collection with brownish yellow mottled with black.

There are many shades of yellow enamels which were used as enamel glazes, such as primrose, canary, lemon, and mustard yellow. Père d'Entrecolles describes the composition of the yellow enamel as iron mixed with the fluxing material; but we know that antimony is the basis of many yellow enamels and it is possible that the Chinese employed this medium as well as iron. But except for the pale transparent yellow of the *famille verte* palette, the yellow enamels mostly belong to the post-K'ang Hsi periods. Specimens with crackled mustard yellow are sometimes claimed as K'ang Hsi, but it is doubtful if the claim can be sustained. This particular type of glaze is formed, like the " apple-green " and camellia-leaf green crackles, by a wash of enamel over a crackled stone-coloured glaze; and in some cases the yellow has a distinctly greenish tint.

Finally oxide of iron is the basis of the *fan hung*, or iron-red, which figures so largely in the *famille verte* enamel decoration. This is the thin coral red usually applied without fluxing material. It is made to adhere to the porcelain before firing by means of ox glue, and it borrows what little gloss it has after firing from the silica in the glaze. It is used as a ground colour on K'ang Hsi porcelain, but nearly always with reserved scrollwork in white or colours (Plate 19). The coral red monochromes are mostly, if not all, later than K'ang Hsi; and there are many later varieties of enamel glazes in which the iron-red was more or less heavily fluxed, but these will be discussed in another chapter.

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[1] In this case *huang pan tien* would appear to be only a variant for the *huang lü tien* (green and yellow spotted) glaze described by D'Entrecolles (p. 60) and mentioned among the three " glazes of the Imperial factory " in the Yung Chêng list (p. 66).

CHAPTER VI

K'ANG HSI MONOCHROMES (contd.) AND COLOURED GLAZES

Oxide of copper is another prolific colouring agent. Under varying conditions of firing it produces reds of cherry, peach, and maroon tints; variegated or *flambé* effects in which the red is splashed and mottled with purple and grey; turquoise; and a long series of green enamels. The most interesting of these colours are the various reds, which are developed from copper oxide mixed with a felspathic glaze in the full heat of the porcelain kiln; and the most typical K'ang Hsi red of this class is the *lang yao*.

It may be recalled that the Hsüan Tê period of the Ming dynasty was noted for a brilliant copper red variously known as *chi hung* (sacrificial red) and *pao shih hung* (precious stone red), the latter because of the story (half myth and half fact) that powdered rubies, or some other precious stones, were mixed with the glaze. The mastery of this colour was difficult to retain and it was apparently lost in the 16th century and only fully recovered in the K'ang Hsi period, by a potter of the name of Lang, who gave his name to the *lang yao* or Lang's ware. The nomenclature *lang yao* does not occur in the standard Chinese works on the Ching-tê Chên porcelain. It is based on oral tradition only; and there is no good reason for connecting it with Lang T'ing-tso, governor of Kiangsi (1654–56) and Viceroy of Kiangsi and Kiangnan (1656–61, and 1665–68), and still less with Lang Shih-ning, as the Chinese called the Jesuit frère Castiglione. The former is absurdly improbable,[1] and the latter impossible because he did not arrive in China till 1715. Persons of the name of Lang are known to have resided in the district[2] and we have only to imagine that one of the family was the potter who revived the celebrated Ming red.

It is more profitable to turn to the letters of Père d'Entrecolles, who alludes to the celebrated red in 1712 and gives a really admirable account of it in his second letter of 1722: "This red in the glaze (*yu li hung*)[3] is made with granulated red copper and the powder of a certain stone or pebble of a reddish colour. A Christian doctor told me that this stone was a kind of alum, used in medicine. The whole is pounded in a mortar and mixed with a youth's urine and the ordinary porcelain glaze; but I have not been able to ascertain the quantities of the ingredients, for those in possession of the secret take good care not to divulge it. This mixture is applied to the porcelain before it is fired and no other glaze is used; but care has to be taken that the red does not run to the bottom of the vase during the firing. They tell me that when they intend to apply this red to porcelain they do not use china stone (*petuntse*), but they use instead of it, mixed with the china clay (*kaolin*), a yellow clay prepared in the same manner as the *petuntse*. Probably it is a kind of clay specially suited to receive this colour."

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[1] It is not necessary to recapitulate the reasons for this statement which are set out in *C.P.P.*, Vol. II, p. 221.

[2] See P. Pelliot, *Notes sur l'Histoire de la Céramique Chinoise*, T'oung Pao, 2e Sèrie, Vol. XXII, 1923, p. 54.

[3] Scherzer (*op. cit.*) uses the term *yu li hung* for underglaze painted red as distinct from the red *sang-de-bœuf* glaze which he calls *chi hung*. It is probable that Père d'Entrecolles has confused the two terms.

The Chinese accounts of the Ming underglaze red all allude to the "red precious stone" as an ingredient of the glaze. Probably it was cornaline (*ma nao*),[1] and, though it can have had no possible effect on the red colour which is solely due to reduced copper oxide, it may well have added brilliancy to the glaze. The yellow clay is probably the same as the "earth used for the underglaze red," the lack of which we are told severely handicapped the Imperial potters in the Chia Ching period of the Ming dynasty. This was doubtless a ferruginous clay, the iron of which could act as a reducing agent on the copper; and as the under glaze red is copper-oxide fired in a reducing atmosphere, such an ingredient would undoubtedly be helpful.[2]

The appearance of the typical *lang yao* is best described by reference to a good specimen. Imagine a bottle-shaped vase with straight neck and rounded body covered with *lang yao* glaze. The colour is an intense red, which tends to flow downwards with the glaze, so that the top of the neck is perhaps left almost white, while below this the red deepens, massing on the shoulders to the density of ox blood (*sang-de-bœuf*); on the sides it thins out again into a vivid cherry red, thickening again at the base, where it stops in a clear even line. A close observation will show that the red forms in innumerable small points and is dragged down by the flow of the glaze: that the colour is deposited on the surface of the ware and does not permeate the glaze itself and that the glaze is full of bubbles and is faintly crackled. There is no red under the base, but here the glaze is sometimes a faint greenish or buff crackle. Mr. Schiller's beautiful little vase (Plate 21) with cherry-red *lang yao* glaze will serve to illustrate these characteristics.

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[1] Also stated to have been used in the glaze of the famous *Ju yao* of the Sung dynasty.

[2] The technique of the copper-red is ably discussed by Prof. Norman Collie in the *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, 1921–22, p. 22.

The secret of the true *lang yao* was certainly kept very closely and it seems to have been lost again at the end of the K'ang Hsi period.[1] It doubtless lay in the composition of the glaze, which was harder and more sluggish than that afterwards used. But the fact remains that the potters of later reigns have never succeeded in completely controlling the flow of the glaze nor in producing a perfect red. On the later wares the red is almost always broken by streaks of grey or purple, which are absent from the *lang yao*, and the glaze runs down over the base and has to be ground off. It is not improbable that the secret may be again recovered. Indeed, the best imitations of the *lang yao* are the most recent, and in some of them the red is admirable, though the overflow of the glaze has not quite been controlled.

Another and rather less rare kind of *lang yao* has a red of crushed strawberry tint and a very bubbly glaze full of pin-holes and of a thickly stippled appearance. It is commonly seen in the form of bowls with gracefully shaped sides and outward spreading rims; and in almost every case it will be found that the glaze beneath the base is a crackled watery green. This green, sometimes called *lang yao* celadon, in a few cases covers the whole surface: the red having disappeared, perhaps owing to too rapid cooling of the ware.[2] A bowl in the British Museum, which has been affected in this way, has been furbished up with *famille verte* enamel decoration.

The copper-red was always a difficult colour to manage and the K'ang Hsi potters were by no means exempt from failures, though some of the partial failures are in themselves not unattractive. There is, for instance, a rare colour known by the poetical name of "ashes of roses." The glaze in this case is faintly crackled like the *sang-de-bœuf* and lightly tinged with copper-red which verges on maroon. In other cases the accidental formation of an oxidising atmosphere in the kiln would cause the copper-red to break out into streaks of purple, blue and grey. These were called by the Chinese *yao pien,* or furnace transmutation effects, and the pieces so affected were regarded by the K'ang Hsi potters as failures and doubtless scrapped as such. In a later reign the potters learnt to produce these variegated glazes at will and to take pride in their mastery of them. Père d'Entrecolles was shown a failure of this kind and he tells us that the potter had been trying to make a *soufflé* red glaze. The expression *rouge soufflé* in other contexts has caused some misapprehension and it has been taken to refer to an iron-red monochrome of powdery texture which belongs to a later period. But the present passage makes it clear that D'Entrecolles was writing of the copper-red glaze, which evidently was, in some cases at any rate, blown (*soufflé*) on to the ware through gauze stretched over the end of a bamboo tube, a process which might help to explain the stippled texture of the red noticed above.

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[1] Attempts to make the *lang yao* evidently did not cease with the K'ang Hsi period. Scherzer (*op. cit.*), writing in 1882, tells us: "The copper-red (*chi hung* or *sang-de-bœuf*) has not been made since the death of the last owner of the secret of its manufacture. Twenty years ago the management of the Imperial factory excused themselves in a memorial to the throne for their inability to execute an order for vases with *chi hung* glaze." It is of course possible that the last owner of the secret was one of the Lang family and that his death took place a hundred and fifty years before the date of this occurrence; but we know of inferior *sang-de-bœuf* porcelains which are evidently the results of later efforts to make the *chi hung* glaze. See also the T'ung Chih list, p. 91.

[2] See Prof. Collie, *loc. cit.* The term *lang yao* has been misapplied by some writers to the "apple-green" crackle, a green enamel over a grey crackled glaze; but it should be realised that the only *lang yao* green is the accidental effect here described.

The use of the copper-red for underglaze painting has been described in the chapter on blue and white (p. 21).

Another much prized red derived from copper is the " peach-bloom," to which the Chinese give a variety of names: *p'in kuo hung* (apple-red), *p'in kuo ch'ing* (apple-green), and *chiang tou hung* (bean-red), the last in allusion to the small Chinese kidney bean which has a variegated pink skin with brown spots.

As will be inferred from these names the " peach-bloom " is not a uniform red colour. It is, in fact, a pinkish-red shading into liver colour or maroon and broken by patches of olive-green and spots of russet brown. The green sometimes extends over large areas; and the glaze is sometimes thick and crackled and fluid enough to run down in drops on the sides of a vessel. Figure 2 of Plate 23 shows the characteristics of a good specimen of peach-bloom with a large area of the apple-green colour, russet spots, and a framework of peach-red. It has been proved to be possible to produce a peach-bloom colour by means of chrome tin,[1] but we have no evidence that the Chinese were aware of this medium; and we shall probably be right in assuming that they got their results from oxide of copper fired under conditions which they learnt by their usual empirical methods.

The peach-bloom colour is usually seen on small articles, such as the water-pots, brush washers (Plate 23) and vermilion boxes used on the writing-table, or on small vases, and there are certain shapes specially associated with this glaze. One of these is the beehive shaped water-pot, which is also known as the *t'ai-po tsun,*[1] because its shape resembled that of the wine-pot on which the drunken poet, Li T'ai po, supported himself in a well-known picture. Another is the elegant bottle, with bulb carved with a band of chrysanthemum petals (cf. Plate 49); and another is a slender, tapering vase with spreading mouth and a base so small that it is unsafe without a deep wooden stand to hold it up. In America this last is usually described as of amphora shape; and it is in fact formed like the body of a slender Greek amphora, but without the distinctive pair of handles. The base of the peach-bloom pieces is glazed white and is always marked in underglaze blue with the date-mark of K'ang Hsi, written in a careful but rather mannered style. But, needless to say, all is not K'ang Hsi which is so marked; and there are many good modern imitations of the peach-bloom glaze to trap the unwary, and we have seen several of the "amphora" vases which belong to this category. The colour in these is sometimes very good, but the paste, glaze and potting have not the finish of the fine K'ang Hsi pieces.

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[1] See *C.P.P.*, Vol. II, p. 177.

We have already noted that the red used in underglaze painted decoration, especially where the colour is in patches, is sometimes thick and bubbly and with a distinct peach-bloom tint. This appears to be an intentional effect and implies the use of special mixture.

The *sang-de-bœufs* and peach-blooms do not exhaust the reds obtained from copper oxide. There are maroon or liver-coloured glazes which differ in texture from both, though they sometimes approach the peach-bloom in their finer shades of colour. Liver colour is a description which does not do justice to the more successful of these glazes. There are, for instance, shapely wine cups with a translucent crimson glaze of great beauty, which belong to this class, and bottle-shaped vases which almost rival the *lang yao* in depth of colour. But the technique of this crimson-red is different from that of the *lang yao* and the peach-bloom. The colour seems to be much more controlled, and where it shades off a clear white glaze appears; and though it is sometimes thick and bubbly it is rarely, if ever, crackled. But there are no redeeming features in this kind of glaze, if it misses success; the failures are brownish maroon or dull liver colour, both unpleasant to look upon.

Among the medium-fired glazes both the turquoise and the leaf green owe their colour to copper. The former is a singularly beautiful glaze and always much admired, though perhaps never so fashionable as it is in Paris to-day. It varies widely in tint and in quality, ranging from a lovely turquoise-blue to deep turquoise-green, and sometimes partaking of both shades; and among the Chinese it has various names: *fei ts'ui* (kingfisher blue), *chi ts'ui* and *k'ung ch'iao lü* (peacock green). It is almost always minutely crackled, but the crackle is much more in evidence on the greener shades of the colour.

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[1] Cf. Plate 72, Fig. 4.

It is not always easy to give a date to the turquoise wares. The colour has been widely used from Ming times to the present day, and we have to base our judgment on shape and style of potting. Needless to say, much of the K'ang Hsi turquoise is extremely fine in colour. It is usually quite plain, but occasionally engraved designs are seen under the glaze. It would appear that a mixture of a coarse (and probably ferruginous) clay[1] in the body helped to develop the turquoise colour. The base of many turquoise vases betrays the presence of this by roughness and redness of the edges; but this mixture does not seem to have been used on the K'ang Hsi wares, which have a fine-grained white body.

According to the *T'ao lu* the three outstanding glazes of the Imperial factory under Ts'ang's management were snake-skin green, spotted yellow, and the *chi ts'ui*, which is doubtless turquoise. *Ts'ui* is the colour of the kingfisher's feathers and is used to describe a turquoise-blue, but the exact force of the character *chi* (lucky) is not easy to explain, and one suspects a variant reading for the more ordinary phrase *fei ts'ui* which is current for the turquoise colour.

Plate 22 illustrates a lovely little bottle with the greenish-turquoise (*ts'ui*) glaze on a white porcelain body, worthy of the Imperial factory under Ts'ang himself; and with it is a bowl with brilliant peacock-blue glaze covering an engraved design of Imperial five-clawed dragons and rock and wave border. The latter has the K'ang Hsi mark under the base.

The numerous shades of green in the medium-fired lead-silicate glazes and the enamels of the muffle kiln are due to copper. The most familiar is the transparent leaf green, which is sometimes used as a monochrome with or without incised or moulded decoration beneath it. It occurs more frequently in the *san ts'ai* (three colour) decoration combined with yellow and aubergine. The cucumber green (*kua p'i lü*) is more distinguished, a yellowish leaf green mottled with darker tints; and there is the snake-skin green (*shê p'i lü*), a very iridescent but transparent green, which is named in the *T'ao lu* as one of the four most beautiful glazes made under Ts'ang's directorate. This last is described apart from the ordinary monochrome green, which, however, comes in for its meed of praise.

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[1] Scherzer (*op. cit.*) tells us that such a special biscuit was used in his time (1882) for both the *flambé* red and turquoise glazes.

There are green enamels used as monochromes, singly and in composite form. Thus the well-known glaze, which is not very aptly described as "apple-green," is formed by coating a stone-coloured grey crackle with a transparent emerald-green enamel (Plate 23). The resultant colour is singularly beautiful and, being highly valued, it is much imitated. The process of its manufacture is so simple that the imitations are apt to be distressingly good, especially when the imitator has selected an old crackle vase as a foundation for his work. They are, however, often betrayed by the care taken to dull the fresh lustre of the new enamel, which will show signs of artificial wear and friction. Many good specimens of the green crackle were made in the Ch'ien Lung period. These will be recognised by the characteristic finish of the base,[1] and it will be noticed that the enamel in these pieces commonly covers the raw edge of the base rim, giving it a brown appearance. The emerald-green enamel is lustrous and rather iridescent, and where it has been broken up by the crackle it often forms in lustrous flakes like the wings of a fly. These *ailes de mouches* are held by some collectors to be signs of age and genuineness; but alas! this simple criterion cannot be trusted: they form on perfectly modern glazes as well.

There are other shades of the composite green crackle besides the brilliant emerald, and it sometimes assumes quite a dark cucumber tone. And, again, there are composite green crackles formed in a similar fashion but with semi-opaque enamel in a variety of tints—camellia-leaf, myrtle, spinach and sage. But it is doubtful if any of this last group are older than the Yung Chêng period. Further, much the same kind of semi-opaque green glaze, with a satiny sheen, has been used on a pottery base, notably at Kashan in Kiangsu.

Frequent mention has been made of "crackle" and an explanation of this phenomenon is overdue. The appearance of a crackled glaze is aptly described by Père d'Entrecolles as a surface "marbled all over and split up in every direction into an infinite number of veins. At a distance it might be taken for broken porcelain, all the fragments of which have remained in place. It is like mosaic work." Doubtless the crackle was at first an accidental effect, but the Chinese immediately saw the value of it and as early as the Sung dynasty they learnt how to produce it at will.

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[1] i.e. wedge-shaped instead of straight-sided.

All pottery shrinks in the kiln, and to ensure an even surface it is necessary that the body and the glaze should contract to the same extent. If the glaze contracts more than the body it will split up into a network of cracks: and the Chinese had to find out how this could be done without ruining the porcelain. In the end they discovered several methods. One was to heat the ware as much as possible in the sun whilst it was drying and then plunge it into pure water. A crackle was produced by this means after the firing. But the more usual method in the K'ang Hsi period is that described by Père d'Entrecolles, namely, to mix *sui yu* (crackle glaze) with the ordinary glaze. The *sui yu* was composed of "pebbles," or, as we learn from the *T'ao lu*, the rock of San-pao-p'êng.[1] The colour of the *sui yu* when used alone was greyish white or ashen, but when mixed with coloured glazes, such as lavender, brown, blue, etc., it had little effect on their actual colours. It is quite clear that the Chinese could regulate the size of the crackle to a great extent, for we sometimes see bands of different sized crackles on the same piece. They also emphasised the crackle lines by rubbing in red ochre, ink, or a decoction of tea leaves while the ware was still warm and the cracks not completely closed. In some cases this stain will be seen to have penetrated beyond the cracks and given the glaze a clouded appearance. This is specially noticeable on the drab and buff crackles, which are the commonest types. We have already noticed that the grey crackles are the foundation of several composite glazes, such as the "apple-green": and that the buff or "oatmeal" crackles are sometimes combined with underglaze blue and even with enamelled decoration. When the blue painting is used in these cases, it is generally laid on pads of white slip locally applied. Specimens of this buff and blue are not uncommon, but most of them are considerably later than the K'ang Hsi period, and the modern specimens will be found to be dull and heavy and to emit no ringing note on percussion.

Plate 23 illustrates the effect of a bold crackle: the finer crackle is termed by the French *truité*. The intentional crackle is quite distinct from the accidental crazing or faint crackling which develops on most of the medium-fired glazes, such as aubergine and turquoise.

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[1] Scherzer (*op. cit.*) obtained samples of the rock from San-pao-p'êng in 1882, and the analysis of it made by Vogt proves that though unctuous to the touch it is not, as has been supposed, a steatite. It contains no magnesium, and under tests it behaves like a pegmatite. Scherzer also informs us that the crackle glaze was blown on to the porcelain and that two layers were applied to produce the finer (*truité*) crackle and four to produce the large crackle

Coloured glazes are used on other types of porcelain besides the monochromes. Even the high-fired glazes, such as blue, celadon-green, copper-red and brown are sometimes combined on parti-coloured wares, especially on certain small figures and ornaments. These little objects usually have a very modern appearance, but a series of them in the Dresden Collection shows that they were certainly made in the K'ang Hsi period. Prof. Zimmermann surmises that some provincial factory was responsible for them.

The celebrated *san ts'ai*, or three-colour ware of the Ming dynasty, was decorated with combinations of the medium-fired glazes—green, aubergine, yellow, turquoise, and purplish blue—and several of the Ming types still survived. The turquoise and aubergine are often seen together on the peach-shaped wine-pots. Bowls and dishes have engraved designs filled in with aubergine, green or yellow glazes in a ground of contrasting colour. The well-known type of " brinjal " bowl has a spray of flowers engraved and washed in with green, white or yellow in an aubergine (brinjal) ground, or, again, the same design is set in a ground of green. Most of these bowls are marked with an indeterminate seal mark in blue, which is commonly called a " shop mark ";[1] and though some of them may be a little earlier than K'ang Hsi they generally belong to that period. Again there are the neat Imperial rice-bowls and dishes with engraved five-clawed dragons, yellow in a green ground, or green in aubergine, or aubergine in yellow. An unusual specimen of this kind is a bowl in the Dresden Collection which has dragons coloured a very dark aubergine, almost black, in a yellow ground. But it must not be assumed that all the rice-bowls of this class with a K'ang Hsi mark belong to the period indicated. There are many of them which have a finish of distinctly Ch'ien Lung appearance; and it is certain that the type was a very enduring one.

In a very much larger and more mixed company of porcelains, the same glazes are applied without any regard to underlying designs. They are either splashed on in large washes or in a motley of patches, or, again, in tortoise-shell formation. The motley of green, yellow, aubergine and white is variously known as " tiger skin " or " leopard skin " or " egg and spinach." This patchwork of glazes is occasionally seen on the finer dishes, such as those made for palace use, but as a rule it appears on a somewhat coarser quality of porcelain which figured largely in the export trade. Père d'Entrecolles has an interesting passage[1] describing this group: "There is a kind of coloured porcelain which is sold at a lower rate than the enamelled ware just described (i.e. the *famille verte*). . . . The material required for this work need not be so fine. Vessels which have already been baked in the great furnace without glaze, and consequently white and lustreless, are coloured by immersion in a bowl filled with the colouring preparation if they are intended to be monochrome. But if they are required to be polychrome like the objects called *huang lü huan*[2] (yellow and green circles), which are divided into kinds of panels, one green, one yellow, etc., the colours are laid on with a large brush. This is all that need be done to this type of porcelain, except that after the firing a little vermilion is applied to certain parts, such as the beaks of birds, etc. This vermilion, however, is not fired, as it would evaporate in the kiln, and consequently it does not last. When the various colours have been applied, the porcelain is refired in the great furnace with the other wares which have not yet been baked; but care is taken to place it at the bottom of the furnace and below the vent-hole where the fire is less fierce; otherwise the great heat would destroy the colours." We recognise at once in this description the amusing little figures of animals, birds, human beings and deities, and the ornaments in form of shrines, boats, rocks, and grottos with parti-coloured glaze, in which green and aubergine bulk largely. We have noted, too, the traces of red pigment on the unglazed bases and the flesh parts of the figures.

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[1] See p. 143.

A similar type of ware was undoubtedly made in the Ming period, but Ming specimens are extremely rare and the authenticated ones[3] show very marked characteristics of their own. It will then be safe to assume, in the absence of some very definite evidence to the contrary, that in this class of ware we are dealing with productions of the K'ang Hsi and later periods, for d'Entrecolles' letter was written in the last year of that reign. Further, the Dresden Collection, which was in the main collected between 1694 and 1705, is very rich in this kind of porcelain. D'Entrecolles' opinion of this ware is unnecessarily low, for, granted that much of it is of rather summary execution, there are many well-modelled ornaments for the writing-table, etc., which are glazed in this fashion; and some of the figures of deities and birds are finely potted and finished and covered with beautiful, sleek glazes which are most attractive.

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[1] Section XIV of the 1722 letter. See Bushell, *op. cit.*

[2] Cf. *huang lü tien* of the Yung Chêng list (p. 66) and *huang pan tien* (p. 50).

[3] See *Wares of the Ming Dynasty*, p. 147.

The glazes used in this group are the softer lead-silicates, smooth, translucent, and to-day slightly iridescent from age. They are apt to be confused with the enamels of the muffle kiln which were also used in washes on the biscuit body (see p. 24); but the latter, in spite of a superficial similarity, are in reality much more fusible and soft, containing more lead; and there are certain palpable differences in colour between the two. The yellow glaze is fuller and browner in colour than the corresponding enamel: the aubergine glaze has more of a claret tint, whereas the aubergine enamel is pinker: and the green enamels are more varied and include a beautiful pale apple-green which does not appear among the glazes.

The glazes are composed of powdered flint, lead, and saltpetre, tinted with the colouring oxides described on page 23; and the three chief colours—green, yellow, and aubergine—are supplemented by a composite black (formed by a wash of transparent glaze over a dull brown-black pigment) and a rather impure white, composed, according to Père d'Entrecolles, of powdered flint and white lead.

A few examples of this class of porcelain are shown on Plate 54. The dignified figure of Chung-li Ch'üan, one of the Eight Immortals, is glazed with a full yellow on the robes and aubergine on the base; and the curious incense-burner, which follows the design of a Han bronze, has a green-glazed body and a yellow head with details in aubergine. The third figure represents the demon god of Literature (see p. 124), K'uei Hsing, standing on the head of a fish-dragon. The rock behind him is hollow and seems to have been adapted for burning incense: it is coloured with a motley of green, yellow, aubergine and white of the "tiger skin" type. The flesh parts of the grotesquely ugly figure are coloured aubergine; the draperies, the dragon and the plinth are yellow. All the glazes are remarkably brilliant and over the fine-grained biscuit they have the lustre of polished jade. Other specimens with coloured glazes are the beautiful magnolia-shaped water-dropper on Plate 48, which has greenish white petals and an aubergine stalk; and the water-dropper in form of a duck and lotus leaf on Plate 72, of which the cup is yellow outside and green within and the duck has the "tiger skin" mottling.

CHAPTER VII

THE YUNG CHÊNG PORCELAIN (1723-35)

The Manchu rule was worthily upheld by the fourth son of K'ang Hsi, who succeeded to the throne, in his forty-sixth year, under the name of Yung Chêng. A firm and just sovereign, he did not shrink from inflicting the supreme penalty on his own brothers when their seditious conduct imperilled the welfare of the State. But that unhappy incident has no bearing on our subject. The new Emperor had shown an interest in the manufacture of porcelain while heir apparent, but it was of a kind which probably was not greatly appreciated by the potters. Père d'Entrecolles tells us that he ordered " a great lamp to be made in one piece, through which a torch gave light to a whole room," besides a number of musical instruments, some of which proved impossible to manufacture. These tests of skill when enforced by royal command usually meant hardship for the potters. However, this was some eighteen years before Yung Chêng succeeded to the throne, and any disservice done by such orders was more than counterbalanced by two wise appointments made during his reign. About the year 1723[1] he placed the direction of the Imperial factory in the hands of Nien Hsi-yao, who as inspector of customs at Huai-an Fu controlled the funds for the Imperial porcelain; and in 1728 he ordered his brother, the Prince of Yi, to announce personally to the celebrated T'ang Ying his appointment as assistant director of the Imperial factory.

The ware made under Nien's directorship is described under the heading of *Nien yao* in the *T'ao lu*, and we are told that Nien's duty was to select the materials and see to the completion of Imperial orders. The coloured porcelain was sent twice monthly to Nien at the Customs and forwarded by him to the Emperor. The ware is described as extremely refined and elegant. "Among the vases many were of egg colour and of rounded form, lustrous and pure white, like silver. Others had blue and coloured decoration combined, and some had painted, engraved, etched or pierced designs all ingeniously fashioned. Imitations of the antique and invention of novelties, these were truly the established principles of Nien."

We are left to infer that Nien took a more intimate interest in the manufacture than would be possible from his seat at the Customs in Huai-an

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[1] Bushell implies that Nien's appointment was not made till 1726, but the *T'ao lu* puts it at the beginning of the reign.

Fu; and we know at any rate that from 1728 onwards he had the invaluable help of T'ang Ying, who made a personal study of all the processes in use.

But a much more illuminating account of the Imperial Yung Chêng wares can be gathered from the list of decorations used at the Imperial factory which was compiled by Hsieh Min, governor of Kiangsi from 1729 to 1734.[1] It is quoted in full below, with the commentator's notes in inverted commas; and it will be seen that much attention was indeed given to "imitation of the antique." In fact, we are told that many of the imitations were made from ancient specimens expressly sent from the Palace collections for the purpose.

(1) Glazes of the Ta Kuan period on an "iron" body, including moon white (*yüeh pai*), pale blue or green (*fên ch'ing*) and deep green (*ta lü*).
(2) Ko glaze on an "iron" body, including millet colour (*mi sê*) and *fên ch'ing*.
(3) Ju glaze without crackle on a "copper" body: the glaze colours copied from a cat's food basin of the Sung dynasty, and a dish for washing brushes moulded with a human face.
(4) Ju glaze with fish-roe crackle on a "copper" body.
(5) White Ting glaze. Only the *fên Ting* was copied, and not the *t'u Ting*.
(6) Chün glazes. Nine varieties are given, of which five were copied from old palace pieces and four from newly acquired specimens.
(7) Reproductions of the *chi hung* red of the Hsüan Tê period: including the fresh red (*hsien hung*) and the ruby red (*pao shih hung*).
(8) Reproductions of the deep violet-blue (*chi ch'ing*) of the Hsüan Tê period. This glaze is deep and reddish, and has orange-peel marks and palm eyes.
(9) Reproductions of the glazes of the Imperial factory: including eel yellow, snake-skin green and spotted yellow.[2]
(10) Lung-ch'üan glazes: including pale and dark shades.
(11) Tung-ch'ing glazes: including pale and dark shades.

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[1] Published in the *Chiang hsi t'ung chih*, bk. 93, fols. 11–13, and translated by Bushell in his *Oriental Ceramic Art*, pp. 368–90. Bushell's rendering has been followed in the main in the above version.

[2] See p. 50. These are K'ang Hsi glazes. For explanations of the Sung and Ming types the reader is referred to the two previous volumes of this series. The Sung types are those mentioned in items 1–6, 10–14, and 18; the Ming in items 7, 8, 15–17, 19, 24–27, 41–43.

(12) Reproductions of the Sung millet-coloured (*mi sê*) glaze: copied in form and colour from fragments dug up at Hsiang Hu.

(13) Sung pale green (*fên ch'ing*): copied from wares found at the same time as the last.

(14) Reproductions of "oil green" (*yu lü*) glaze: "copied from an old transmutation (*yao pien*) ware like green jade (*pi yü*) with brilliant colour broken by variegated passages and of antique elegance."

(15) The Chün glaze of the muffle kiln (*lu chün*). "The colour is between that of the Kwangtung wares and the Yi-hsing applied glaze (*kua yu*); and in the ornamental markings (*hua wên*) and the transmutation tints of the flowing glaze it surpasses them."

(16) Ou's glazes, with red and blue markings.

(17) Blue mottled (*ch'ing tien*) glazes: copied from old *Kuang yao*.

(18) Moon white (*yüeh pai*) glazes. "The colour somewhat resembles the Ta Kuan glaze, but the body of the ware is white. The glaze is without crackle, and there are two shades—pale and dark."

(19) Reproductions of the ruby red (*pao shao*) of the Hsüan Tê: the decoration consisting of (1) three fishes, (2) three fruits, (3) three fungus, or (4) the five Blessings.[1]

(20) Reproductions of the Lung-ch'üan glaze with ruby red decoration of the kind just described. "This is a new style of the reigning dynasty."

(21) Turquoise (*fei ts'ui*) glazes. Copying three sorts: (1) pure turquoise, (2) blue flecked, and (3) gold flecked (*chin tien*).

(22) *Soufflé* red (*ch'ui hung*) glaze.

(23) *Soufflé* blue (*ch'ui ch'ing*) glaze.

(24) Reproductions of Yung Lo porcelain: eggshell (*t'o t'ai*), pure white with engraved (*chui*) or embossed (*kung*) designs.

(25) Copies of Wan Li and Chêng Tê enamelled (*wu ts'ai*) porcelain.

(26) Copies of Ch'êng Hua enamelled (*wu ts'ai*) porcelain.

(27) Porcelain with ornament in Hsüan Tê style in a yellow ground.

(28) Cloisonné blue (*fa ch'ing*) glaze. "This glaze is the result of recent attempts to match this colour (i.e. the deep blue of the cloisonné enamels). As compared with the deep and reddish *chi ch'ing*, it is darker and more vividly blue (*ts'ui*), and it has no orange-peel or palm-eye markings."

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[1] Symbolised by five bats. The Blessings are: longevity, riches, peace and serenity, love of virtue and an end crowning the life.

(29) Reproductions of European wares with lifelike designs carved and engraved. " Sets of the five sacrificial utensils, dishes, plates, vases, and boxes and the like are also decorated with coloured pictures in European style."

(30) Reproductions of wares with incised green decoration in a yellow glaze (*chiao huang*).

(31) Reproductions of yellow-glazed wares: including plain monochromes and those with incised ornament.

(32) Reproductions of purple-brown (*tzŭ*) glazed wares: including plain monochromes and those with incised ornament.

(33) Porcelain with engraved ornament: including all kinds of glazes.

(34) Porcelain with embossed (*tui*) ornament: including all kinds of glazes.

(35) Painted red (*mo hung*)[1]: copying old specimens.

(36) Red decoration (*ts'ai hung*)[2]: copying old specimens.

(37) Porcelain in yellow after the European style.

(38) Porcelain in purple-brown (*tzŭ*) after the European style.

(39) Silvered (*mo yin*) porcelain.

(40) Porcelain painted in ink (*shui mo*).

(41) Reproductions of the pure white (*t'ien pai*) porcelain of the Hsüan Tê period: including a variety of wares thick and thin, large and small.

(42) Reproductions of Chia Ching wares with blue designs.

(43) Reproductions of Ch'êng Hua pale painted (*tan miao*) blue designs.

(44) Millet colour (*mi sê*) glazes. " Differing from the Sung millet colour." In two shades, dark and light.

(45) Porcelain with red in the glaze (*yu li hung*): including (1) painted designs exclusively in red, (2) the combination of blue foliage with red flowers.

(46) Reproductions of lustrous brown (*tzŭ chin*) glaze: including two varieties, brown and yellow.

(47) Porcelain with yellow glaze (*chiao huang*) decorated in enamel colours (*wu ts'ai*). " This is the result of recent experiments."

(48) Reproductions of green-glazed porcelain: including that with plain ground and engraved ornament.

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[1] The *mo hung* porcelain has an iron-red ground laid on with a brush. A bowl in the Eumorfopoulos Collection illustrates this type. It has, on the exterior, medallions set in a red ground on which the brush marks are clearly seen.

[2] The *ts'ai hung* has the design painted in iron-red on the white ground.

(49) Wares with foreign colours (*yang ts'ai*). "In the new copies of the Western style of painting in enamels (*fa-lang*) the landscapes and figure scenes, the flowering plants and birds are without exception of supernatural beauty and finish."

(50) Porcelain with embossed ornament (*kung hua*): including all kinds of glazes.

(51) Porcelain with European (*hsi yang*) red colour.

(52) Reproductions of *wu chin* (mirror black) glazes: including those with black ground and white designs and those with black ground and gilding.

(53) Porcelain with European green colour.

(54) European *wu chin* (mirror black) wares.

(55) Gilt (*mo chin*) porcelain: copying the Japanese.

(56) Porcelain with gilt designs (*miao chin*): copying the Japanese.

(57) Porcelain with silvered designs (*miao yin*): copying the Japanese.

(58) Large jars (*ta kang*) with Imperial factory glazes. "Dimensions: diameter at the mouth, 3 ft. 4 or 5 in. to 4 ft.; height, 1 ft. 7 or 8 in. to 2 ft. Glaze colours: (1) eel yellow, (2) cucumber green, and (3) mottled green and yellow (*huang lü tien*)."

It is evident from this list that monochromes will bulk largely among Yung Chêng porcelains, and that many of them will be conscious imitations of the old Sung and Ming types. Among the latter are the celadon greens and blue-greys, the crackled ash-coloured and buff glazes of the Ko types, the crackled lavender and *clair de lune* of the Kuan, and the variegated Chün glazes. They will, however, be distinguished from the originals by the white porcelain body of Ching-tê Chên, if not actually by Yung Chêng marks, though in some of the reproductions (those of the Kuan and Ko, for example) the old dark-coloured bodies were imitated by a dressing of dark ferruginous clay at the edges. This dressing is as a rule easily recognised. The imitations of the fine creamy white Ting wares are the *chiang t'ai* or paste-bodied wares already discussed among the K'ang Hsi whites; and collectors of Ming porcelain are familiar with the exquisite copies of the white Yung Lo eggshell porcelain. Many of the other monochromes will be recognised as those described in the last chapter, the copper reds, *soufflé* red and powder-blue, turquoise, mirror black, eel yellow, cucumber green and "spotted" yellow. Without actual marks, it will be difficult to distinguish the K'ang Hsi and Yung Chêng varieties of these wares; and we shall have to rely chiefly on our appreciation of form and finish. The new monochromes, as we learn from the *T'ao lu* in a passage eulogising the work of T'ang Ying, are almost all due to T'ang Ying himself, and can therefore be dated after the year 1728. They are the European purple and black, the cloisonné blue, sky blue and transmutation glazes. The last-named are the well-known *flambé* or variegated glazes derived from copper—red splashed and streaked with purple, blue and grey. They had appeared before in the misfiring of the *lang yao* red, but had been counted only among the failures. Now the potters learnt how to produce them at will; and the *flambé* glaze became as much part of their stock-in-trade as the crackle glaze. This is made evident by those rather eccentric specimens in which blue and white porcelain has been coated with patches of *flambé*. Another new glaze which is occasionally associated with the Yung Chêng mark is the tea-dust, a brown or bronze-green flecked with opaque tea-green. This monochrome, much prized to-day in America, is, however, generally regarded as a Ch'ien Lung speciality. The porcelain enamelled in " yellow after the European style " is explained by Bushell as that with a coating of lemon yellow, one of the opaque enamels of the muffle kiln. Engraved and embossed designs underlie many of the monochromes, particularly the medium-fired glazes, such as the green, aubergine, and yellow; and one item of the list alludes to incised designs in green set in a yellow glaze, a well-known Ming type also copied in the K'ang Hsi period.[1]

Turning to the blue and white porcelain we find that the K'ang Hsi traditions were preserved on the ordinary wares; but it is evident that this kind of porcelain was going out of fashion and that less care was now taken in its manufacture. The blue lacks the pulsating depths and the purity of the fine K'ang Hsi blue and there is a tendency to abandon the graded washes for pencilling. On the other hand, much ingenuity was expended on reproductions of old Ming types, such as the mottled blue of the Hsüan Tê and the thick outlines and thick flat washes which are characteristic of the Chêng Tê period. The list also reminds us that the dark violet Mohammedan blue of the Chia Ching period and the pale Ch'êng Hua blue were imitated. Further, we know from marked examples that the paste and glaze and peculiar Ming finish of the foot-rim were carefully copied, and that there is a real difficulty in distinguishing the finer Yung Chêng reproductions, both of blue and white and enamelled wares, from the Ming originals. Nor was there any falling off in the

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[1] See p. 59.

" steatitic " blue and white (see p. 18). Indeed, with the decadence of the ordinary blue and white, the Yung Chêng and Ch'ien Lung potters seem to have concentrated on this dainty ware.

The reference in Hsieh Min's list to " porcelain with ornament in Hsüan Tê style in a yellow ground " doubtless alludes to underglaze blue designs surrounded by yellow enamel. Such at any rate is the inference we should draw from a dish of this description in the British Museum, which has the Hsüan Tê mark. Painting in underglaze red is mentioned under three headings in the same list. In one it is *yu li hung* (red in the glaze), including painted designs exclusively in red and the combinations of " blue foliage and red flowers." Both types are well known, and it has already been remarked that the underglaze red painting was particularly successful in the Yung Chêng and Ch'ien Lung periods. In another place it is the *pao shao* (ruby-red) of the Hsüan Tê period, in decorations consisting of " three fishes, three fruits, three funguses, or the five Blessings (*wu fu*)," symbolised by five bats. The dainty stem-cups of Hsüan Tê porcelain with three red fishes standing out in brilliant contrast with the white ground are a familiar type[1] ; and it is easy to visualise the other designs similarly displayed. The third allusion is to the same designs in " ruby-red " under the Lung-ch'üan (i.e. celadon green) glaze. This, we are told, is a new style of the reigning dynasty. We have already had occasion to note that a celadon glaze appeared to be a peculiarly sympathetic medium for the underglaze red, and in existing specimens the red is seen to have developed its most brilliant tints under the celadon-green. An amplification of the same technique is seen in some very beautiful porcelains which have designs in underglaze blue and red on a backing of white slip in a celadon ground ; and from this we are led on to another choice ware which has similar designs in a ground of pale lavender blue. Vases of both kinds are occasionally seen with old French ormolu mounts.

But the most decided changes are seen in the enamelled porcelains. For these the Yung Chêng was a period of transition. The *famille verte* was going out of fashion, though it still lingered on on sufferance, and the new palette of opaque enamels, the *famille rose*, was being perfected. But the old translucent enamels still figured in the imitations of the Ming porcelains of which the Ch'êng Tê and Wan Li types are specially mentioned in Hsieh Min's list. The usual *wu ts'ai* (enamelled ware) of the Wan Li period is that decorated with enamel colours combined with underglaze blue, but there is also the " red and green " family from which the blue is absent, besides porcelain painted in red alone which is also specified in item 36 of the list.

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[1] See *Wares of the Ming Dynasty*, Plate 3.

The tradition of the Ch'êng Hua period was delicate painting in pale transparent enamels with or without underglaze blue, and excellent Yung Chêng renderings of this type are known. They bear the Ch'êng Hua mark. It would seem, too, that a very characteristic Yung Chêng decoration grew out of these Ch'êng Hua imitations. In this the design is painted in underglaze blue and then covered with thin washes of transparent enamels. This peculiarly Yung Chêng style of enamelling is illustrated by Fig. 1 of Plate 55.

But specimens of all these types are few in comparison with the *famille rose* porcelains of this period. The many allusions to European colours in Hsieh Min's list refer to the opaque enamels of the *famille rose,* which are variously known as *juan ts'ai* (soft colouring) or *yang ts'ai* (foreign colouring). T'ang Ying in his twenty illustrations of the processes of porcelain manufacture[1] explains the term "foreign colouring" as "painting the white porcelain in enamels (*wu ts'ai*) after the manner of the Western foreigners (*hsi yang*)," and he adds that the colours used are the same as those used for enamelling on metal (*fo lang* ware). *Fo lang* or *fa lang* are terms applied both to cloisonné and to painted enamels such as were made at Canton: and to the latter the Chinese attributed a Western origin.[2] Probably the allusion is to painted French enamels which were brought to China by traders and missionaries. We know that novelties of this kind were much appreciated at the Imperial Court. In any case it can hardly refer to any European porcelain or even pottery at this period, for the European potters followed rather than led the Chinese in the matter of on-glaze enamel painting. The express reference to "coloured pictures in European style" in No. 29 of Hsieh Min's list may perhaps mean, as Hippisley suggests, that pictures by Jesuit artists such as Gherardini and Belleville were sent to the Imperial factory to be copied on the porcelain (see p. 97).

Two of the colours of the *famille rose* palette are found on the late K'ang Hsi porcelain, viz. the rose-pink which is derived from precipitate of gold (purple of Cassius) and the opaque arsenious white. But the rose is a poor and undeveloped colour, a muddy pink which does not add much to the attractions of the *famille verte*. This colour, which now developed beautiful shades of ruby, rose, and carmine, became the dominating tint of the *famille rose*. The Chinese call it *yen chih hung* or rouge red. The other members of the rose family of enamels—the blue, green, yellow, etc.—are derived from the same metallic oxides—cobalt, copper, iron, and antimony—as were used to colour the transparent *famille verte* enamels; but the *famille rose* enamels are mostly opaque and in addition to the primary colours they include a great variety of mixed tints. Thus the rose-pink is modified with white to produce the *fên hung* or pale pink, and with white and blue to make the amaranth or blue lotus (*ch'ing lien*) colour. A turquoise tint is obtained by mixing white and green; and the ordinary leaf green is darkened by increasing the lead ingredient of the flux and made bluer by the addition of potash. The same colour was combined with yellow to make an opaque yellowish green (the *ku lü* or ancient green); and a tinge of green added to white gave the very pale green known as *yüeh pai* or moon white. Other mixed colours are lavender, French grey, and *eau de nil*, which is probably the European green of Hsieh Min's list. The ordinary thin iron-red of the *famille verte* was still used, but it was also mixed with the glassy flux to form the thick jujube-red (*tsao hung*); and similarly the dry brown pigment, which forms the backing of the K'ang Hsi black enamel, was mixed with flux to form the "European black."

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[1] Incorporated in the *T'ao shuo.* See Bushell, *op. cit.,* p. 25.

[2] The Chinese state that they came from *Ku li* (Calicut), which doubtless means that they were imported from one of the trading stations on the coast of India; beyond that they do not trace them.

We have seen that a good many of the "European colours" are included in the innovations made by T'ang Ying after 1728; but we have evidence that the *famille rose* palette was far advanced before that date. A bowl in the British Museum,[1] which has a rose-pink exterior and a dainty spray of flowers in *famille rose* colours thrown across the white ground in typical Yung Chêng style, bears the cyclical date (in underglaze blue) "*hsin ch'ou* year recurring." This year, the thirty-eighth of the cycle,[2] recurred in the sixtieth year of K'ang Hsi, i.e. 1721; and allowing for the possibility that the porcelain may not have been enamelled for some little time after its first firing, it is fair to assume that this piece and its companion saucer were decorated not later than the early years of Yung Chêng.

The Yung Chêng enamelled wares of Ching-tê Chên are usually decorated in an exceedingly refined and delicate style. Sprays of flowers, blossoming boughs with the usual accompaniment of birds and insects are artistically painted on broad expanses of white, a nicely balanced decoration in which the beauty of the porcelain is allowed to play its part to the full. But there is another large group of the *famille rose*, made in the Yung Chêng and early Ch'ien Lung periods, in which the "foreign colours" occupy almost all the field. This was decorated in the enamelling establishments at Canton by the artists who painted the Canton enamels on copper, and the same designs and colouring are seen on both kinds of ware. The actual porcelain, which is usually of fine quality and eggshell thinness, was supplied from Ching-tê Chên and it was decorated at Canton expressly for the foreign merchants who were in touch with the enamellers there. The designs usually consist of a central panel with a Chinese interior including ladies and children, vases and furniture, and baskets of flowers or dishes of fruit (see Plate 56); or perhaps the picture represents a pheasant on a rock, quails and millet, a cock and peonies or some other stock subject. The central design is framed in borders of richly coloured diaper patterns —hexagon or square, lozenge, trellis, matting, etc.—broken by medallions of flowering plants, landscape or archaic dragons. On some of the plates as many as seven different border patterns can be counted (Plate 56). There is much variety in the ware, which is sometimes painted in one single colour such as blue, or in black and gold, and sometimes the elaborate borders are replaced by delicate gilt designs or by ruby-pink in monochrome or variegated by floral sprays. The sides and rims of dishes are often covered with ruby-pink or carmine, and this is such a constant feature that the ware is commonly known as "ruby back" porcelain. Again, there are cups and saucers, tea-pots and whole table services with ruby-pink grounds broken by symmetrical panels of enamelled decoration or by reserves in the form of picture scrolls, fans, leaves or fruit. The same decoration is also applied on a larger scale to vases of various forms, but here again a European destination is indicated, for they are generally in mantelpiece sets consisting of three covered jars and two beakers. A magnificent specimen from one of these gorgeous sets in the J. B. Joel Collection is illustrated in colour on Plate 25.

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[1] See *B.M. Guide*, p. 89 and Fig. 127.

[2] See p. 141.

The evidence connecting this group of *famille rose* with the Canton workshops is now well known. Apart from the obvious similarity in designs and style of painting which exists between the porcelain and the Canton enamels, there are instances in which the designs of the same artist are used on both materials. Pictures signed by Pai-shih are a case in point, and in one well-known specimen of ruby-back porcelain in the British Museum the signature is attached to the inscription, *ling nan hui chê*, which means *Canton picture*. In another case a Pai-shih dish bears the cyclical date corresponding to 1724; but as these inscriptions are in the field of decoration, we are only at liberty to assume that this is the date of the picture copied on the porcelain. There are, however, specimens of this Canton work which bear the Yung Chêng mark in blue under the base, and these we can take as evidence that this class of ware was made in the period under discussion. If, however, the general distrust of Chinese date-marks prevents the reader accepting this evidence, there are specimens in the Dresden Collection which may convince him ; and there is a tankard in the British Museum (Plate 70, Fig. 2) painted in Canton style and bearing the arms of Yorke and Cocks which must for heraldic reasons have been made between 1720 and 1733 ; and there is also a cup and saucer with *famille rose* enamelling and the arms of the Dutch East India Company dated 1728.

The *famille rose* enamels are also seen in panels set in grounds of high-fired glazes. On the "Batavian ware" the ground colour is lustrous coffee-brown (*tzŭ chin*) ; and there are a few rare specimens with *famille rose* panels in a ground of mirror black (*wu chin*). A vase in the Lady Lever Art Gallery has a mirror black glaze on which scattered designs are painted in *famille rose* enamels. This probably explains the *yang ts'ai wu chin* (mirror black with foreign colours) which is included by the *T'ao lu* among T'ang Ying's innovations, though the actual specimen in question apparently belongs to the Ch'ien Lung period.

The fortieth item in Hsieh Min's list is "porcelain painted in ink (*shui mo*)." This refers to a well-known type of porcelain with designs pencilled in dry black or brown-black with or without gilding. Père d'Entrecolles tells us in his letter of 1722 that an attempt had actually been made to paint the ware in Chinese ink, but (naturally) without success. Evidently the proper medium (the dry black, manganese pigment) was discovered by T'ang Ying. Black and gold is frequently used in border designs on Yung Chêng and Ch'ien Lung wares, and red and gold are used in the same manner. The red and gold designs sometimes form the entire decoration of vases of this period. Another invention ascribed to T'ang was the use of silver both for ground-laying and for painting. Examples of the former on the borders of *famille rose* plates and of the latter on dishes with lustrous brown glaze are to be seen in the British Museum : but the silver very soon loses its colour and turns black. Professor Zimmermann[1] alludes to rare examples of silvered designs (instead of the usual gilding) on powder-blue. But it is evident that T'ang can only have introduced the use of silvering at the Imperial factory and that he was not the inventor of it, for Père d'Entrecolles alludes to porcelain decorated with silvered designs on a lustrous brown glaze as early as 1722.

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[1] *Chinesische Porzellan*, p. 240.

The Yung Chêng *famille rose* is best known in Europe by the work of the Canton enamellers, and Western collections contain numerous examples mostly made for the European market. Some of it, such as the dishes on Plate 56, is exquisitely finished, some is coarse and commonplace; and in any case, if not used with restraint, its effect as decoration is apt to be overpowering. The native taste of the time is more truly reflected in such specimens as Fig. 1 of Plate 57, a dish in which the beauty of the almost perfect porcelain is set off by an exquisitely drawn design of flowering plants and butterflies. By a favourite trick of the Yung Chêng artists the picture begins on the reverse of the dish and is completed on the main surface. Dishes like this—and we know of some of imposing dimensions—have the distinction which is the hall-mark of the best Yung Chêng porcelain, be it dish or bowl or vase. The same beautiful but naturalistic rendering of flowering plants is seen again in Figs. 2 and 3 of Plate 62, though here the enamels are survivals of the *famille verte*. It was indeed a tradition which lasted for more than one generation, for we see it again in Ch'ien Lung specimens such as the bowl with poppies on Plate 57, and again on the so-called Ku-yüeh porcelain which is discussed on page 82. The same spirit inspires the specimens on Plate 58: one a remarkable dish with a life-like picture of a quail and peonies painted over a faintly incised design of Imperial dragons, the back covered with ruby-pink enamel in the centre of which is a plain gilt medallion: the other a bowl of beautiful white porcelain with five medallions formed of butterflies and flowers in which a complete mastery of the grading and blending of the *famille rose* colours is displayed.

CHAPTER VIII

CH'IEN LUNG PORCELAIN (1736-95)

Four was evidently the lucky number of the Manchu royal family. Again it was the fourth son who was chosen to succeed to the throne and again the choice proved fortunate for China. The new Emperor who reigned under the name of Ch'ien Lung was perhaps the greatest of all Chinese rulers. His rule was autocracy at its best, when a large-minded, brave and gifted monarch wholeheartedly devotes his talents to the service of the State. Ch'ien Lung was master of the arts of war no less than of those of peace, and the Chinese Empire reached its widest expansion during his reign. Chinese Turkestan and Tibet were brought beneath its sway and even India was made to feel its power. The untamed aboriginal tribes in the South and West were subdued, and Burmah, Siam and Annam became its tributaries. Meanwhile China herself enjoyed a prolonged period of good government with its natural accompaniment of prosperity.

But, strange to say, the same reign which witnessed the culminating greatness of the Manchu power also saw implanted the seeds of decay. In his old age Ch'ien Lung committed the fatal fault which had been the ruin of the Ming dynasty. He allowed the reins of power to slip into the hands of an unworthy favourite, named Ho Shên, whose corruption and misrule brought up a harvest of discontent for the next Emperor to reap. In 1795 Ch'ien Lung abdicated the throne at the age of eighty-six in fulfilment of his vow that he would not outreign his illustrious grandfather K'ang Hsi; but he remained a power in the land until his death, which took place in 1799.

Ch'ien Lung was a great patron of the arts, himself a poet and calligrapher and a determined collector of antiques. The Catalogue of the Imperial Collection of bronzes compiled by his orders ranks as a classic on this subject; and poems of his composition and in his style of calligraphy are occasionally seen on porcelain and jade. One of his first acts was the appointment of T'ang Ying to succeed Nien Hsi-yao as commissioner of customs at Huai-an Fu, a post which carried with it the direction of the Imperial porcelain factory. The Imperial porcelain was shipped to Peking by the Grand Canal and Huai-an Fu, which is situated on the canal, was doubtless a convenient place to supervise this traffic; but it was inconveniently distant for Ching-tê Chên, and in 1739 the commissionership was transferred to Kiu-kiang, at the junction of the Po-yang Lake and the Yangtze, which is within much easier reach of the centre of porcelain manufacture. T'ang Ying remained in charge until 1749, and it is unlikely that he was content to direct the work only from a distance. Of all the directors of the Imperial factory T'ang had the most intimate knowledge of the manufacturing processes. Indeed when first sent to Ching-tê Chên in 1728 he served a voluntary apprenticeship of three years, eating, sleeping and working with the potters. He was in fact an expert ceramist and, as already seen, he was able to introduce many new methods of manufacture. He was also an authoritative writer on the subject, as is evident from his autobiography and his collected works. Before taking up his post at the customs in 1736, he compiled notes setting out the practical knowledge accumulated during eight years' work, for the benefit of his successors; and in 1743 at the command of the Emperor he wrote a description of the processes of porcelain manufacture as a commentary on twenty pictures in the Imperial Collection. Prints of these pictures are known to us, some by the illustrations appended to the *Ching tê chên t'ao lu* and twelve of them by copies exhibited with the porcelain collection in the British Museum. Moreover, T'ang's descriptions are incorporated in the *T'ao shuo*, which was published in 1774, in the section dealing with " modern wares " ; and Bushell's translation of this important work is available for English readers.

A eulogy of T'ang's work in the *T'ao lu* tells us " that he had a profound knowledge of the properties of the different kinds of clay and of the action of the fire upon them, and he took every care in the selection of proper materials, so that his wares were all exquisite, lustrous, and of perfect purity. In imitating the celebrated wares of antiquity he never failed to make an exact copy, and in the imitation of all sorts of famous glazes there were none which he could not cleverly reproduce. There was, in fact, nothing that he could not successfully accomplish. . . . The clay used was white, rich, and refined, and the body of the porcelain, whether thick or thin, was always unctuous (*ni*). The Imperial wares attained their greatest perfection at this time." We have omitted the sentences which record T'ang's innovations, because they repeat the various items of Hsieh Min's list on which we have already commented. The only fresh item is *yao pien*, or transmutation, glaze which will be explained presently. Elsewhere we learn that among T'ang's special triumphs were the revival of the old dragon fish-bowls (*lung kang*) and of the Sung *Chün yao* glazes and the turquoise and rose (*mei kuei*) colours in " new tints and rare beauty." The rose colour is doubtless the ruby-pink enamel of the *famille rose ;* and indeed most of T'ang's novelties belong to the group of " foreign colours." The critical reader may ask how these colours were claimed as novelties by

T'ang, whose work did not begin before 1728, when we have seen that they were in use as early as 1721. The answer is that new blends of the *famille rose* colours were constantly added to the list and in any case T'ang's work was only concerned with the Imperial wares.

It is evident that in dealing with the Ch'ien Lung porcelains we shall be confronted with a bewildering quantity of material; and, though it can hardly be dismissed by a few general assertions in the manner of the *T'ao lu*, it is a comfort to know that much of the ground has already been covered in the chapters on K'ang Hsi and Yung Chêng wares. Of the numerous monochromes there are few which do not figure in Hsieh Min's list. The imitations of the antique are fully explained in that document and we need only add that the fashion of collecting antique bronzes, porcelains, etc., which was set by the Emperor and permeated Chinese society in general, reacted powerfully on the porcelain of the time. The shapes of old bronzes and jades were freely used for the display of the old glazes and at no period of Chinese ceramics were archaic forms so sedulously copied.

With regard to the colours, the underglaze red appears chiefly in the crimson and liver-coloured glazes, of which there is a considerable variety. One is crimson of stippled appearance which seems to have been blown on (*soufflé*), and another, and rarer, kind is a "fluescent glaze of light liver-red deepening into crimson." Curiously enough this last is generally found on one particular form of vessel, a jug-shaped ewer with long pointed spout which is protected by a corresponding projection from the cover, the whole recalling a Thibetan temple bronze. This type of glaze is distinguished in Japan by the name of *toko*. The *lang yao* reds were not, as far as we know, made with any measure of success at this time. The control of the glaze is conspicuously wanting in the Ch'ien Lung attempts at *sang-de-bœuf*, and the red is generally broken by streaks of purple, blue and grey. On the other hand, the *flambé* effects, which come from subjecting the copper-red to a reducing atmosphere in the kiln, were freely produced; and one of T'ang's triumphs was the mastery of this kind of variegated glaze. Not only were fine results obtained with the rich crimson glazes mottled and streaked with grey, blue, purple and green: but a variegated, or transmutation, glaze could be applied locally with certainty of effect, and we find it run over other glazes, and even over blue and white wares. There are, too, a number of complex glazes which were specialities of the Ch'ien Lung period. Bronze-greens, iron-rust (a dark reddish brown strewn with metallic specks) and tea-dust (*ch'a yeh mo*), an ochreous-brown or bronze-green thickly flecked with opaque tea-green. It is said that the tea-dust glaze was one of those specially reserved for the Emperor. There were, too, numerous composite greens in which opaque green enamel was laid over a crackled glaze, producing, for example, the sage and camellia-leaf tints. And there were mottled glazes with bird's-egg markings, in which rose-pink enamel was blown on to an opaque bluish green. The so-called "robin's egg" glaze belongs to this class, and so does, apparently, the "Chün glaze of the muffle kiln" which is mentioned in Hsieh Min's list (cf. Fig. 8 of Plate 69).

Two of T'ang's glazes singled out for special notice in the preface to his collected works are the turquoise and the rose-pink. We certainly do find many lovely specimens of the turquoise glaze among the Ch'ien Lung porcelains, though they do not differ notably from the K'ang Hsi pieces except in shape and in the body material which is often reddish and of rather rough texture. The last feature was due to a mixture of ferruginous earth which seems to have helped the development of the turquoise colour. It has also been noticed that some of the Ch'ien Lung vases made with this mixture are exceptionally light in weight.

The rose-pink (*mei kuei*) is evidently an enamel of the *famille rose* type, the same in fact as is seen on the ruby-back dishes. We find it now used as a monochrome in various shades of deep ruby and carmine, mostly on small vases of eggshell porcelain which sometimes has a granulated or "orange-peel" surface. Occasionally it appears in broken tints of clouded crimson, a sort of *famille rose flambé*.

Many other opaque *famille rose* enamels were used as monochromes. Among the yellows, for instance, there are the lemon,[1] an opaque enamel with rather rough skin, and the crackled mustard-yellow. There are enamel blues such as the intense cloisonné blue and the amaranth or blue lotus colour. And there is a fine *soufflé* iron-red, thicker and more rich in flux than the ordinary enameller's coral-red, which is sometimes called "jujube-red." A small vase in the Salting Collection (No. 2091) is an unusually fine specimen of this deep "juicy" red enamel. And there are an opaque bluish green, almost a turquoise-green, which is seen occasionally as a monochrome but more often as a wash on the inside of bowls and on the mouth and under the base of vases; and an enamel black which is described as "lac black" in the list of T'ang's achievements.

Again, some of the choicest Ch'ien Lung monochromes have glazes of well-established type, such as sky blue, dark blue, lavender, delicate *clair*

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[1] The orange-yellow and the sulphur-yellow of the period are more in the nature of glazes; the latter is apt to break into lustrous patches.

de lune, celadon green, mirror black, lustrous brown, and crackles of many kinds. The medium-fired glazes include the usual yellows, greens, and lustrous aubergine-purple, and a dark violet-blue which is the colour of the roof tiles and of the sacrificial vessels of the Temple of Heaven at Peking. There is also a dark blue glaze rather thick and fluescent, which is used as a surround for *famille rose* panels. Like the powder-blue and mirror black this glaze is usually relieved by gilt traceries. Finally there are the pure whites and the opaque "paste-bodied" ware of Ting type with beautiful cream glaze.

There is, in fact, no known glaze effect which was not successfully produced by the Ch'ien Lung potters, and when they had exhausted the range of plain monochromes they tested their skill with the imitation of all manner of alien substances. Bronzes were ingeniously copied with their varying patinas and their gold and silver inlay: cloisonné enamels, emerald-green jade, cinnabar-red Peking lacquer, grained wood and even millefiori glass were reproduced well enough to deceive the superficial observer. To quote the words of the *T'ao shuo*[1], "among all the works of art in carved gold, embossed silver, chiselled stone, lacquer, mother-of-pearl, bamboo and wood, gourd and shell, there is not one that is not now produced in porcelain, a perfect copy of the original piece."

We may mention here the "*lac burgauté*," though it is not strictly an imitation of lacquer in porcelain. It is rather porcelain coated with black lacquer in which elaborate designs such as landscapes, figures, etc., are cleverly inlaid in mother-of-pearl. Most of this work seems to date from the Ch'ien Lung period, though there may be a few specimens as early as K'ang Hsi. Lacquering on a porcelain body was not unknown to the late Ming potters and it is occasionally seen on the 19th-century wares; but it was not practised in China to the same extent as in Japan.

The Ch'ien Lung blue and white is not comparable with that of the K'ang Hsi period, but it was still sufficiently important to monopolise three of T'ang's illustrations of the manufacturing processes. From these we can learn that the cobalt mineral was now obtained from the mountains in Chekiang and that large services with the same pattern accurately repeated were supplied for the palace use. The same processes of refining the blue, and of applying it to the ware and the same division of labour were employed as in the K'ang Hsi period, and T'ang's descriptions cover for the most part familiar ground. He tells us, however, that if the blue is over-fired it tends to run into the white glaze and that if it is not covered by the glaze it comes out black. One sees occasional pieces of biscuit porcelain with designs pencilled in a thick dry black, and we may assume that we are dealing here with blue-painted specimens left deliberately unglazed. T'ang also refers to one kind of blue called *onion sprouts* " which makes very clearly defined brush-strokes and does not run in the fire and this must be used for the most delicate pieces." This fine blue was doubtless that used in painting the " steatitic " porcelain which was now made in considerable quantity, both that with the *hua shih* body and that with only a surface wash of that mineral.[1] The latter, which might be conveniently distinguished as " steatite dip," had the advantage of being usable in vases of large size ; and we find many finely pencilled specimens of both kinds among the Ch'ien Lung blue and whites. For the rest the ordinary blue and white of the period is mostly painted with designs borrowed from bronzes—ogre heads, stiff leaves, arabesques and meanders—or with rather close and fussy floral scrolls generally in the blotchy or mottled blue which characterised some of the early Ming porcelains. There is, too, the common blue and white made chiefly for export, but it has no distinction either in the colour or the designs.

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[1] Bushell, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

On the other hand, painting in underglaze red was carried on with marked success at this time, and the potters showed their skill in the management of this difficult colour. This red was also used in combination with underglaze blue or with passages of celadon glaze and white slip and again under a pale celadon glaze, as on the Yung Chêng wares.

We need not linger on the decoration in medium-fired coloured glazes on the Ch'ien Lung porcelain. It was in use now as in the previous reigns, and there are many neat little rice-bowls with engraved dragon designs glazed green in a ground of yellow, or yellow in an aubergine ground, or in other combinations, which belong to this period, even though many of them have the K'ang Hsi mark. But there is one type of ware with coloured glazes which is peculiarly Ch'ien Lung.[2] It generally takes the form of vases modelled after bronze designs and often with elephant-head handles and stiff ornament in low relief or with engraved outlines, covered with sleek, smooth glazes—a full brownish yellow, leaf green, aubergine, white and a vivid blue which is perhaps the outstanding feature of this ware. The seal-box on Plate 74 is decorated in this style. The same decoration and the same glazes are also seen on an earthenware body.

At the beginning of the Ch'ien Lung period the vogue of the *famille rose* was at its height, and all other kinds of polychrome and painted wares shrank into insignificance beside the immense variety of enamelled porcelains of this type. The author of the *T'ao shuo* tells us plainly that " foreign colouring " was still paramount in his day (the book was published in 1774) : " porcelain painted in colours," he says, " excelled in the Ming dynasty, the majority of the patterns being derived from embroidery and brocaded silks, three or four out of each ten being from Nature and copies of antiques. In modern porcelain, out of ten designs you will get four of foreign colouring, three taken from Nature, two copies of antiques, one from embroidery or silk brocade." In actual fact the proportion of " foreign colouring," i.e. *famille rose* decoration in our interpretation of the term, to other painted wares is more like eight out of ten ; for *famille verte* is now practically non-existent and, excluding blue and red painting under the glaze, practically all the painted designs whether taken from Nature or embroidery are rendered in the enamels of the rose family. Possibly the writer makes a distinction between the Canton type—the ruby back dishes, etc.—which avowedly followed the Canton enamels, a ware of foreign origin, and the porcelain decorated with the traditional Chinese designs. As to the designs, there is no lack in the *famille rose* porcelain of those taken from Nature. There are landscapes, flowering plants and birds, the "hundred flowers" which the French call *mille fleurs*, the "hundred deer," a design representing numbers of deer in landscape,[1] the "hundred birds," to mention only a few typical examples. Brocade patterns are frequent in borders and in the close floral scrolls which meander through grounds of yellow and pink, a characteristic Ch'ien Lung decoration both on porcelain and on cloisonné enamels.

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[1] See p. 19.

[2] See *C.P.P.*, Vol. II, Plate 124, Fig. 2.

The *famille rose* colours have already been fully described, and those of the Ch'ien Lung period show few fresh features, unless it be the use of mixed tints to give light and shade somewhat in the European style. One sees, for instance, graded tints on the petals of flowers and in the rendering of rocks and hills. But there are certain new kinds of decoration which should be noticed. The surface of small vases, bowls, and dishes, for instance, is sometimes covered with an opaque enamel—pink, yellow, green, blue, lavender or grey—which is engraved all over with feathery scrolls. This *graviata* decoration, as it is called, occasionally occurs on monochromes, but more often the ground is broken by painted floral sprays or inset scrolls or by reserved medallions of painted designs. A vase with this decoration in the Ezekiel Collection is shown on Plate 59 ; and there is a very elaborate specimen with coloured flowers in a pink ground engraved with geometrical ornament in the Salting Collection (No. 1418). There is, too, a class of rice-bowl decorated in this manner with medallions set in an opaque enamel ground, *graviata* or otherwise, which is known by the name of Peking bowls. These were made for the Palace and sent to Peking, and it must not be inferred from the name that they were manufactured at the capital. The contents of the medallions are usually floral designs, landscapes or figure subjects, but it is no uncommon thing to find an obviously European figure depicted in them. The Peking bowls continued to be made in the ensuing reigns and some of the best are of Tao Kuang date. Another form of *graviata* is seen occasionally on bowls and dishes which are coated with a faintly greenish white enamel engraved with formal wave pattern. This white enamel sometimes has a curious shrivelled or chilled appearance and it is generally rather lustrous when applied as a ground colour. A similar opaque white is used for tracing delicate floral borders on the rims of dishes, and for floral scroll patterns on the sides of bowls, etc.

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[1] After a late Ming picture by Wên Chêng-ming.

Much play was made with the iron-reds of coral or brick tint on the Ch'ien Lung ware. Large areas of the porcelain are often occupied by this colour, which is sometimes of powdery texture indicating that it has been blown on; and again it is used as a ground colour for enamelled medallions or panels (Plate 66), and like so many of the ground colours it is occasionally relieved by gilding. Gilding and silvering occur with greater frequency now than in previous periods; black and gold, and red and gold are used in delicate floral scrollwork, and whole surfaces of bronze-green and celadon monochromes are painted with close arabesques and scrolls in gold. Gold, too, often replaces the lustrous brown on the edges of plates and bowls. Various kinds of black appear in the enamelled decoration, notably the "foreign" black in which the pigment and flux are mixed together and applied like an ordinary enamel. This black is used in combination with the *famille rose* enamels (Plate 60, Fig. 1), often as a ground colour inlaid with enamelled scrollwork. The *famille verte* black—formed by a green wash over a dry black pigment—is also used, but to a limited extent and generally in a particular decoration in which a close floral scrollwork is reserved in the black pigment ground and the whole surface, both black and white, washed over with transparent green (Plate 59, Fig. 2).

Though we are in the habit of speaking of Chinese porcelain as if it were a uniform composition, there are in reality many exceptions to the general recipe for its manufacture. Indeed we have already noted several, such as the "steatitic" and "paste-bodied" wares, besides the variations in the glaze made to suit different types of decoration. A study of Chinese snuff-bottles, for instance, will make one acquainted with a surprising variety of bodies and glazes, and among them one cannot fail to notice a dead white porcelain of soft and glassy appearance. This would appear to have originated in an attempt to copy in porcelain a special kind of opaque glass which was made at the Imperial glass works at Peking under the directorship of an artist named Hu. The component parts of the character *hu*, if taken separately, can be read as *ku yüeh* (ancient moon), and Hu consequently adopted the studio name of Ku Yüeh Hsüan (Ancient Moon Pavilion). The Ku-yüeh glass was sometimes painted in enamels to which a peculiar delicacy was imparted by the soft excipient; and the story is that the Emperor, who admired the ware, expressed a wish that the same effect should be produced in porcelain, and that T'ang Ying made this peculiarly glassy ware in response to the Imperial demand.[1]

Not only, indeed, was the material copied in porcelain but an enamelled decoration in what is known as the Ku-yüeh style came into being. This consists of floral designs, landscapes with figures, which are sometimes in European taste, painted in soft, delicate *famille rose* or mixed enamels. The execution of the painting is singularly fine, and there is an unusual play of light and shade in the pictures.

The enamelled Ku-yüeh glass is extremely rare and costly to-day. There is a specimen in the Hippisley Collection—a small brush-pot with figures of the Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove—which was illustrated in my *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*[2], and there is another in the Ezekiel Collection. Landscapes with dark brown rocks, flowering plants exquisitely drawn and coloured to Nature, and white-robed figures appear to be the favourite designs on this painted glass; and the *fang ku yüeh*, or imitation Ku-yüeh, ware should reproduce these features of decoration on a peculiarly fine and glassy white porcelain. We are fortunate in being able to illustrate the latter by Fig. 1 of Plate 26, a tiny bottle-shaped vase intended to hold a single spray of flowers on the writing-table, and which is probably the best example of the ware outside China. It is perfect in every detail, the quality of the body and glaze and the supreme delicacy of the drawing and colouring of the simple design with rock, flowering begonia and iris and hovering insect. A stanza of verse with seals of the artist complete the picture ; and the mark, that of the Ch'ien Lung period, is in mauve enamel.

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[1] The Ku-yüeh glass belongs to both Yung Chêng and Ch'ien Lung periods.

[2] Vol. II, Plate 125.

The teapot on Plate 63 is also of glassy white porcelain with design on a larger scale but executed with scarcely less refinement. It has also a stanza of verses and seals and the Ch'ien Lung mark in enamel. The glassy body and raised enamel marks would suggest that Figs. 2 and 3 of Plate 62 belong also to the Ku-yüeh class, but the designs on these for all their beauty are not strictly in the Ku-yüeh style or colouring.

On the other hand, we have specimens on which the Ku-yüeh style of painting is clearly followed, but on a porcelain which has no obvious relation to the original glass. The remarkable vase on Plate 61 has an "orange-peel" glaze enamelled in Ku-yüeh style with a landscape, shepherdess and sheep. There is something so distinctly European in the composition of this picture—the pose and expression of the figure and the general grouping—that one cannot resist the conclusion that it is a Chinese interpretation of a European design. It has indeed been suggested that the originals of such pictures[1] as this were the work of one of the Jesuits, such as Gherardini and Belleville, who are said to have started a school of painting in China on European lines; but this is a matter of conjecture.

Three rams, symbolising the return of spring, a rock and flowering plants form the decoration of a beautiful bowl in the Warre Collection illustrated on Plate 26. The painting is in the Ku-yüeh style, but the porcelain is a peculiar ivory white which is rarely seen elsewhere. Again, the panels of the brush-pot (Fig. 1, Plate 73) must be regarded as examples of Ku-yüeh style—that with the tall white figure compares closely with the designs on Ku-yüeh glass—but the ware is of the ordinary Ch'ien Lung type.

The influence of the Ku-yüeh style was not transient. It lasted through the long reign of Ch'ien Lung, and we see it reflected in the better class of 19th-century enamelled porcelains. Indeed, when the old designs are used, as on a bowl with Tao Kuang mark in the Ezekiel Collection, the decoration is not distinguishable from that of the Ch'ien Lung specimens. It seems, in fact, that we should distinguish the specimens with glassy body as of the early period when the type was initiated, and those with the ordinary body as younger members of the family.

The glassy porcelain of the Ku-yüeh type was not used solely for enamelled wares. It is occasionally seen with pencilled designs in underglaze blue and also with a peculiar kind of "tattooed" decoration.[1] In this latter type, which has already been described, the design is incised in the body of the ware, a little blue is rubbed into the incisions and the whole is glazed. The finished effect is a very faint blue decoration under the glaze.

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[1] In the Lady Lever Art Gallery there is a pair of vases with design of a shepherd and fairy-like lady which seems to be an echo of some European pastoral subject.

It will be convenient to mention here two special types of decoration which date from the Ch'ien Lung period. One is called "lace-work" and the other "rice-grain." In the former the designs—generally close floral scrolls—are deeply incised in the body of the ware and the whole is covered with a glaze of faint celadon green tint. The glaze fills up and emphasises the incised designs, which appear as semi-transparencies when held against the light. Marked specimens of this ware generally bear the reign-name of Ch'ien Lung; but there are rare instances in which the mark is that of the Ming Emperor Hsüan Tê. There is, however, no reference to a decoration of this kind in the descriptions of Ming porcelain, and it is probable that Ming marks on this "lace-work" porcelain are apocryphal. The "rice-grain" decoration goes a step further, and the pattern is formed by cutting out small segments of the body about the size and shape of a grain of rice. The glaze—in this case an ordinary white glaze—is run over the ware and fills up the perforations with a transparent glass, so that the design is seen in tiny window-panes when held against the light. The Japanese give this ware the picturesque name of *hotarude* (fire-fly style). The rice-grain decoration is often supplemented by underglaze blue and sometimes by enamelled designs. The Ch'ien Lung mark appears on this ware, but it was also made in subsequent reigns; and a good specimen in the British Museum is inscribed in blue with the name of the potter Wang Shêng-kao and a date corresponding to 1798: another piece has the Tao Kuang mark of the Shên-tê Hall.[2] The rice-grain decoration, though a comparatively modern innovation in China, was used by Persian and Syrian potters as long ago as the 12th century.

Nor were the Ch'ien Lung potters a whit behind their predecessors in the manipulation of delicate openwork and reliefs. Witness the lanterns with finely pierced fretwork panels, the perforated perfume boxes, dishes with openwork borders, vases with pierced outer casing and even with free revolving belts, perfume vases hung on porcelain chains, teapots with panels of openwork and moulded and encrusted flowers, and tea ware modelled in the form of lotus flowers and coloured after Nature. There were figures, too, of all kinds modelled in the round and decorated with the typical Ch'ien Lung enamelling, genre figures, deities, animals and birds, beside the dainty little objects used on the writing-table which were moulded in all manner of quaint shapes.

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[1] See also p. 21.

[2] See p. 147.

Looking at the finer Ch'ien Lung porcelains, especially those made for Imperial use and for the more fastidious Chinese connoisseurs, we are ready to admit at once that the Chinese potters reached the zenith of manipulative skill during this period. Whether we admire these perfect productions as much as the bolder and broader effects of the Ming and K'ang Hsi wares is a matter of taste. There are many who tire very soon of the soft tones of the *famille rose* and the miniature-like delicacy of its designs, and turn with relief to the more virile and less cloying style of the earlier wares. They find, too, that for decorative effect the latter are more satisfying. Again, the Ch'ien Lung imitations of the antique are too finished and elaborate to be convincing, and the forms have often a rather forced ingenuity which contrasts ill with the simple, restful shapes which come naturally on the potter's wheel. Indeed, the Ch'ien Lung decoration in the main is more pretty than beautiful; and neatness and artificial elegance rule in place of boldness and vigour.

But whatever our views may be on the merits of the Ch'ien Lung porcelain, they should be based on the true representatives of the art, the wares made for Chinese consumption; and we must leave for separate consideration the vast quantities of export porcelains which came to Europe during this long reign and still survive there in considerable numbers. Though not altogether devoid of merit, this class of ware is on the whole inferior stuff and obviously made for foreign consumption. It consists largely of table wares, tea and coffee services, rose-water ewers of bottle-shape with basins to match, punch-bowls, ornaments and vases, the last generally in pairs or sets of five. The usual mantelpiece set includes two beakers and three covered vases or jars; the latter are generally of slender oval form, sometimes square or with flattened sides, and the covers are often surmounted with a figure of a lion.

The so-called "Mandarin" porcelain belongs to this group. It has nothing to do with *kuan yao* or official porcelain of the Chinese texts, but gets its name from the fact that groups of figures in Mandarin dress frequently appear in the panels which form a constant part of its decoration. These panels are painted in underglaze blue and enamel colours, in which pink and coral-red are daringly combined, and they are commonly framed with composite designs of blue and white, pink scale diaper and gilt feathery scrolls broken by small vignettes and medallions in which are sketchy landscapes, birds on branches and growing flowers in pink, red, or sepia (Plate 70). In some cases the surrounds of the panels are moulded in low relief or encrusted with reliefs of rat and vine pattern or flowers and foliage; or, again, they are granulated with small dots, giving a sort of shagreened surface which is enamelled in pale bluish green. Some of the Mandarin vases are made of fine eggshell porcelain and others have the lumpy "orange-peel" glaze which was much affected at this time; but as a rule the ware itself has no special distinction.

A less elaborate but kindred ware has similar composite borders and surrounds, but the panels are occupied by sprays of roses or other flowers in pink and red, drawn in a very European style. Such flowers as these figure largely on the minor English porcelains of the late 18th century made at Lowestoft and New Hall and elsewhere. In fact, it is hard to say whether the Chinese ware of this class was more indebted to Europe for its not very distinguished decoration or vice versa. But more will be said on this point in another chapter.

Among the most familiar of the late Ch'ien Lung export wares are the punch-bowls and vases brought back by the tea-merchants. These are commonly decorated in the Mandarin style, but the panels are sometimes filled with European figures instead of Chinese.

It is doubtful if any of this Mandarin porcelain would be found in China to-day. It is not in Chinese taste and was probably almost all exported. It belongs to the last half of the 18th century and it superseded the early 18th-century "red and blue" family (see p. 40) in the foreign trade. One might easily form quite a collection of both these types in Europe to-day, and they are not to be despised as decoration, though they are in no way representative of the Chinese potter's art.

CHAPTER IX

THE 19TH-CENTURY PORCELAIN

The reign of Chia Ch'ing (1796–1820), who succeeded Ch'ien Lung, was an age of insurrection. A powerful aboriginal tribe called the Miao-tzŭ revolted in Kweichow and was only suppressed after much difficulty and many reverses. The seething discontent caused by the extortions and injustices of the eunuch Ho Shên culminated in the White Lily rebellion which broke out in Hupeh in 1796 and was not quelled till 1804. The corrupt Ho Shên himself was put to death immediately after the decease of Ch'ien Lung in 1799; and his ill-gotten gains, which reached the huge total of 2,000,000,000 taels, were sequestered; but it is calculated that the whole of this sum was expended in dealing with the White Lily rebellion. It was, moreover, made clear that the long period of luxurious living in China had sapped the fibre of the Manchus and that they had ceased to be the race of doughty warriors which had conquered China. After the rebellion came a series of mutinies in the army; and the crushing of the White Lilies did not discourage the growth of numerous other secret societies which now honeycombed the country. Incidentally we might mention that in striking at these the Emperor laid his ban on the Roman Catholic Church, which had hitherto enjoyed a large measure of toleration in China.

The reign of Tao Kuang which followed (1821–50) was hardly less disturbed; and to internal troubles was added the first Foreign War, which broke out in 1840 and ended with the Treaty of Nanking in 1842. By this treaty China was forced to cede Hongkong to the British, to open a number of ports to foreign trade and to treat foreign nations on terms of equality. A treaty which was now made with the French removed the ban on the Roman Catholic Church.

But the most serious danger which threatened the Manchu throne was the great T'ai P'ing rebellion. The first symptoms of this upheaval were felt in the province of Kwangsi, where a band of semi-Christian fanatics took up arms in 1850, led by a man who arrogated to himself the title of T'ien Wang, or prince of Heaven. This rebellion, which soon assumed an entirely un-Christian aspect, gradually attained formidable dimensions and involved the whole of Central China. It lasted through the whole of the succeeding reign of Hsien Fêng (1851–61) and was not finally suppressed until 1865.

Meanwhile the second Foreign War broke out in 1856 and resulted in the treaties of Tientsin in 1858 and of Peking in 1860. More treaty-ports were opened to foreign trade and the foreign powers received the right to establish legations in Peking. The reign of T'ung Chih (1862–74) was a period of restoration; but civil and foreign wars had by this time sapped the power of the Manchus and the disruption of the dynasty after the death of T'ung Chih was only delayed by the strong personality of a woman. The Emperor Kuang Hsü (1875–1908) ascended the throne as a child and the real power was vested in Tz'ŭ Hsi, the famous Empress-Dowager, who came to be familiarly known as "the old Buddha." The final scenes of the Manchu downfall are still fresh in our memories.

Kuang Hsü and Tz'ŭ Hsi died on successive days in November, 1908; and another child Emperor, Hsüan T'ung, was placed on the throne, with Prince Shun, a Manchu reactionary, as regent. But a movement in favour of a republic had already begun; it was now successful in the south and in the beginning of 1912 Sun Yat Sen was proclaimed President. The north, however, remained loyal to the Manchus and civil war seemed inevitable; but Yüan Shih-k'ai averted this calamity by a settlement which involved the abdication of the Manchu Emperor and the establishment of the republic with Yüan himself as President. It is well known that Yüan contemplated the eventual seizure of the throne, but death put an end to his ambitions and the Chinese Republic remains in being.

The reign of Chia Ch'ing (1796–1820) is not remarkable for any ceramic progress. To a certain extent the potters maintained the Ch'ien Lung standard of manufacture; but the art had now passed its maturity and in the absence of any new development it tended definitely to decline. Were it not for the reign-mark, it would be no easy matter to differentiate the Chia Ch'ing porcelains from the later productions of the preceding reign. One could make a considerable list of the specimens on which this mark occurs—rice-bowls with dragon designs in coloured glazes, "Peking" medallion-bowls, vases with *famille verte* enamels, tea-dust monochromes, "rice-grain" porcelains, etc.—but they would add nothing fresh to what has been said in the last chapter. There are a few dated specimens in the British Museum which belong to this period. Two are blue and white of a commonplace kind: another has a thick brick-red ground (a heavily fluxed iron-red) with enamelled medallions; and another has the same colour outside and a mottled brownish black enamel within. In the same collection there is a flattened circular box decorated with scroll designs in pale underglaze blue over which are gilt patterns, a style of decoration which Bushell[1] assigns to the Chia Ch'ing period.

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[1] *O.C.A.*, p. 464.

For the rest we may be content to regard this reign for ceramic purposes as an extension of the Ch'ien Lung.

In the Tao Kuang period (1821–50) the decadence observed in the wares of the previous reign becomes more and more apparent. The porcelain material shows a marked degeneration in quality; the body is chalky and coarse in grain; and the glaze, which is bubbly, has that muslin-like texture which characterises the coarser Japanese wares, and an exaggerated oily sheen. Such is the common ware of the period, and its inferiority is emphasised by a few finer types which were still made, the last flicker of an art on the point of extinction. Some, indeed, of the Imperial wares of the time are worthy of a place in collectors' cabinets, and others have enough character at any rate to call for discussion. The Peking medallion-bowls, for instance, are still of high quality, and they often differ from those with the marks of earlier reigns in having underglaze blue designs in their interiors. The enamelled decoration, too, is carefully and conscientiously executed in a characteristic style in which translucent and opaque enamels are blended. These mixed enamels, though rather sickly in bulk, are often handled with considerable delicacy, and there are Tao Kuang rice-bowls decorated with them which would not discredit any Ch'ien Lung collection. Among the colours used one notices a thin and very lustrous greenish wash: it is effectively used, for instance, where water is depicted; and a similar lustrous wash appears on a particular type of porcelain, the date of which has been the subject of much discussion. Quite a number of specimens of this ware are in existence, bowls and saucer-shaped dishes, and perhaps they all belong to one or two services made for Imperial use. They are faintly engraved with the usual Imperial design of five-clawed dragons pursuing pearls among clouds, but the engraving is covered with a decoration of large fruit and foliage in thin green, yellow and aubergine glazes in a ground of greenish white which has the peculiar lustre above described. The mark is usually that of the K'ang Hsi period, but the ware—in many specimens, at any rate—is far more like that of the Tao Kuang. A fine example in the Joshua Collection (Plate 67, Fig. 1) has the unusual mark *Ch'u hsiu kung chih* (made for the palace where elegance is stored) which is evidently a palace hall-mark.

Hall-marks[1] are frequent on the early 19th-century porcelain, some of them evidently referring to halls or pavilions in the Imperial precincts, others to the workshops of manufacturers or decorators. A typical instance is the well-known mark of the Shên-tê Hall. It appears on a variety of porcelains, some of high quality, e.g. a bowl delicately painted in the mixed enamels of the period, a vase with opaque lavender-blue ground and Imperial dragon designs in colour in the British Museum (Plate 68), and a bowl decorated with black lacquer in the David Collection. This last specimen has the shape and finish of a Ming bowl, but the style of the lacquer is frankly modern. There are other specimens which show that one of the specialities of this factory was imitation of older wares, notably two pieces in the British Museum. One of these is a blue and white bowl, of which the paste, glaze, design and blue are excellent reproductions of the Ming; and the other is a dish[1] painted, in the style and colouring of the late Ming "red and green family," well enough to deceive, were it not for the mark which states that the dish is an "antique made at the Shên-tê Hall." This dish has the deeply channelled base-rim which one sometimes sees on K'ang Hsi porcelains, and so good is the ware that it has been stoutly maintained that the mark must at least be of the K'ang Hsi period. The other specimens, however, have manifestly Tao Kuang characteristics, and one in the Hippisley[2] Collection clinches the matter, as it is inscribed with a poem written by Tao Kuang himself.

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[1] See p. 142.

Other Tao Kuang enamelled wares revive the Yung Chêng style of painting in underglaze blue washed over with pale transparent enamels; and there is a rather coarse kind of ware with *famille rose* decoration on a celadon green glaze which bears the mark of the period. There were, of course, blue-and-whites and monochromes made at this time; but they have no features worthy of notice, if we except certain small dishes, boxes, brush-pots and the like which have deeply carved designs in the manner of the red Peking lacquer. These are usually covered with opaque bluish green, yellow or red enamels (sometimes they are left in the biscuit state); and, as they bear the names of makers,[3] they are probably the work of some individual factory.

It may be added that some of the snuff-bottles made at this time are of very high quality; but we propose to deal with the snuff-bottles in another place.

The activities at Ching-tê Chên were rudely interrupted in the reign of Hsien Fêng (1851–61) by the T'ai P'ing rebellion. In 1853 the town itself was taken and the Imperial factory burnt to the ground. The few specimens which bear the mark of this period are not distinguishable from the mediocre work of the preceding reign. In the reign of T'ung Chih (1862–73), on the expulsion of the rebels from Kiangsi by the celebrated viceroy, Li Hung-chang, the Imperial factory was rebuilt. This took place in 1864, and we have a list of the palace wares which was dated in the same year. This list has considerable interest in that it gives us an insight into Chinese shapes and designs, even if they are for the most part borrowed from the porcelain of previous periods. Our only fear is that such a list will raise undue expectations of the T'ung Chih wares; for actual dated examples are for the most part of quite indifferent quality.

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[1] *B.M. Guide*, Fig. 154.

[2] Catalogue, No. 367.

[3] Wang Ping-jung and Wang Tso-t'ing. See p. 147.

LIST OF IMPERIAL PORCELAINS SUPPLIED IN THE THIRD YEAR OF T'UNG CHIH (1864)

(1) Quadrangular vases with apricot medallions and two tubular handles with Chün glaze.
(2) Vases of the same form with Ko glaze.
(3) Quadrangular vases with the Eight Trigrams (*pa kua*) and Ko glaze.
(4) Vases in the form of jade ewers with red (*chi hung*) glaze.
(5) Vases of the same form, with blue and white decoration and raised borders.
(6) Vases of the same form with blue and white decoration with balcony.
(7) Paper-beater vases with the *t'ai chi* symbol and the glaze of the Imperial factory decorated in colours. (The *t'ai chi* symbol is the *yin-yang*: see p. 131.)
(8) Sky-blue quadrangular vases with elephant symbol of great peace (apparently vases with elephant-head handles).
(9) Medium-sized bowls with dragons in aubergine brown (*tzŭ*).
(10) Medium-sized bowls with *chi hung* glaze.
(11) Large bowls with Indian lotus in blue.
(12) Five-inch dishes (*p'an*), similarly decorated.
(13) Medium-sized bowls with storks and the Eight Trigrams.
(14) Wine-cups with narcissus flowers in enamels.
(15) Wine-cups with spreading rim painted with dragons in red.
(16) Dishes (*p'an*) a foot in diameter decorated in blue with a pair of dragons filling the surface.

(17) Soup-bowls with incised dragons under a dark yellow glaze.
(18) Medium-sized bowls, barrel-shaped, with dragons engraved under a yellow glaze.
(19) Yellow tea-cups.
(20) Medium-sized bowls with dragons engraved under a yellow glaze.
(21) Medium-sized bowls with the three fruits in groups painted in blue.
(22) Soup-bowls with expanding rim and dragons incised under yellow glaze.
(23) Six-inch bowls with a pair of dragons in blue.
(24) One-foot dishes painted in blue with silkworm scrolls and longevity characters.
(25) Tea-cups decorated in blue with *olea fragrans* flowers (*mu hsi*).
(26) Medium-sized bowls with precious lotus in enamel colours.
(27) Tea-cups with white bamboo on a painted red ground.
(28) Six-inch dishes painted in blue with the " three friends " and figure subjects.
(29) Tea-dishes (*ch'a p'an*) with a pair of dragons in blue.
(30) Six-inch dishes with green dragons on a ground of engraved water-pattern painted in colours.
(31) One-foot dishes painted in blue with archaic phœnixes (*k'uei fêng*).
(32) Nine-inch dishes with blue ground and dragons in clouds painted in yellow.
(33) Medium-sized bowls with pure white glaze and ruby-red phœnix medallions.
(34) Tea-cups with dragons and clouds painted in yellow in a blue ground.
(35) Six-inch dishes with red (*chi hung*) glaze.
(36) Medium-sized bowls with deep violet-blue (*chi ch'ing*) glaze.
(37) Nine-inch dishes with *chi hung* glaze.
(38) Soup-bowls, barrel-shaped, with lustrous brown glaze.
(39) Medium-sized bowls with red phœnix medallions in a celadon (*tung ch'ing*) glaze.
(40) Nine-inch dishes with silkworm scrolls and *ju-i* ornament in enamel colours.
(41) Tea-cups enamelled in colours with mandarin ducks and lotus flowers.
(42) Tea-bowls (*ch'a wan*) with *chi ch'ing* glaze.
(43) Tea-bowls decorated in colours with the *pa pao* (the Eight Precious Things: see p. 137).
(44) Large bowls with the Eight Immortals in blue on red enamelled waves.

(45) Medium-sized bowls, blue and white inside, and with coloured lotus flowers outside.
(46) Bowls with the Eight Buddhist symbols (*pa chi hsiang*: see p. 127).
(47) Bowls with green designs and peach-yellow ground.
(48) Five-inch dishes with purple and green dragons in a yellow ground.
(49) Three-inch platters with similar ornament.
(50) Soup-bowls of the fourth size with yellow glaze.
(51) Five-inch dishes with phœnixes in clouds.
(52) Medium-sized bowls with dragons and phœnixes among flowers in coloured enamels.
(53) Four-inch platters (*tieh*) with purple and green dragons in yellow ground.
(54) Nine-inch dishes painted in colours with the Eight Buddhist symbols among flowers.
(55) Large bowls painted in colours with archaic phœnixes (*k'uei fêng*) among flowers.

The chief interest which collectors have in the wares of the Kuang Hsü and Hsüan T'ung periods is to avoid them. This is usually a simple feat, for in spite of their apocryphal K'ang Hsi and Ch'ien Lung marks they are for the most part betrayed by inferior material and weak designs. There are, however, some carefully made specimens which give the collector pause, e.g. some of the better of the modern *famille noire* and biscuit-enamelled pieces, and a few of the *sang-de-bœuf*, peach-bloom and apple-green porcelains. A note of warning may be heard in Scherzer's account of his observations at Ching-tê Chên in 1882.[1] The material of the Imperial wares, he tells us, was still carefully refined and of superior character and the decoration executed by the most skilful craftsmen. "Every piece which leaves the Imperial factory is made exactly according to the design sent from the Imperial household; and I believe it would tax the most practised expert to discover the smallest difference between two pieces—as, for example, two bowls with green or aubergine dragons in a yellow ground, the one made two hundred years ago and the other fresh from the kilns, if there were no reign-mark to help him." Scherzer tells us that there was one family of potters of the name of Ho who made "imitations of *sang-de-bœuf* red wares: but the glazes were generally too thick and the colour uneven." They were made on a rather coarse body of stoneware type and apparently there was no attempt to control the flow of the glaze at the foot-rim. He calls this ware *kun houng* as distinct from the *chi hung* of the *lang yao*, and he is evidently referring to the modern red *flambé*. Turquoise, celadon, lustrous brown, mirror black, deep blue and crackled monochromes were also made, besides porcelain painted in underglaze blue and red and " steatitic " wares. From this it would appear that something of their old cunning had been recovered by the Ching-tê Chên potters at the end of the 19th century. But the ordinary trade goods which are still made in the old styles and furnished with old marks (mostly the K'ang Hsi mark) will hardly deceive the rawest tyro.

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[1] *op. cit.*

Among the few frankly modern porcelains of which collectors will desire a specimen, are those with a palace mark[1] of the famous Empress-Dowager. They are generally painted in mixed enamels and have some merit apart from their associations. Another modern porcelain which must be rare enough to be worth attention is that described in an article in the *Connoisseur*.[2] It was apparently made to the order of Yüan Shih-k'ai when he was contemplating the seizure of the throne, and some of it bears the reign-name of Hung Hsien which Yüan evidently intended to assume. Early in 1916 Yüan apparently took over one of the former Imperial kilns at Ching-tê Chên and gave orders for porcelain to be made for his personal use. Specimens of the ware are shown in the *Connoisseur*. It is painted in enamel colours in the style of the late Manchu Imperial wares, and like them it generally has a wash of bluish-green enamel on the base and inside the mouth ; and it bears various marks, viz. the reign-name Hung Hsien, the character *kuan* (Imperial) and the hall-mark *Chü jên t'ang chih* (made in the hall where benevolence abides).

SNUFF-BOTTLES

A place apart is usually reserved in collections for snuff-bottles. Indeed, there are some collectors who concentrate on these dainty little objects to the exclusion of all else ; and as their manufacture was not confined to any particular period, we have kept the subject for the end of this chapter.

Tiny vases for holding drugs and pigments have been made in China since medieval times, and they are described by early writers as *yao p'ing* or medicine vases, but the snuff-bottle proper belongs to the Ch'ing dynasty and it would be difficult to find a specimen which could reasonably be ascribed to an earlier date than the 18th century. Tobacco was introduced into China from Manila in 1530, but we are not told when the habit of snuff-taking began; and we would hazard the conjecture that it was caught from the European traders about two centuries ago. This at any rate is the time when the manufacture of the little flask-shaped bottles, fitted with spoon-stoppers for ladling out the snuff, became common. Since then the snuff-bottle has been a fashionable article, and the elegant Chinese usually carries one on his person and has one or two laid out on a table in his reception-room.

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[1] *Ta ya chai*. See p. 147.

[2] By W. H. Adgey-Edgar, October, 1923. The hall-mark *Chü jên t'ang chih* is incorrectly read in this article.

They are not always made of porcelain. Jade and other hard stones and glass of various ingenious makes figure largely in collections of snuff-bottles; but for the moment we are concerned with those which were made at Ching-tê Chên. The potters seem to have delighted in displaying their skill and ingenuity in their manufacture and many of them are veritable gems in porcelain. A good collection would illustrate in miniature the whole story of Ch'ing porcelain. Monochromes such as the *lang yao* red, apple-green, *clair de lune*, lavender and celadon: painting in underglaze blue and red: enamelled decoration of all kinds both on the glaze and on the biscuit: moulded and incised decorations: intricate carving in relief and openwork: and modelling of quaint forms—human, animal, and vegetable—in the round would all be adequately represented, besides the various special types of porcelain, the glassy white, the "crackled steatitic" and the creamy Ting types. In addition there would be several kinds of decoration rarely seen on the larger wares, such as black enamel ground with underglaze blue designs reserved, decoration reserved in white in a black ground, marbled porcelain biscuit, etc.

Marks earlier than Yung Chêng are unusual, but they range from this period onwards and many admirable specimens bear the reign-names of Chia Ch'ing and Tao Kuang. There are besides many rough and crude little bottles which mostly belong to the first half of the 19th century. Such things were largely traded abroad and used as medicine bottles in Egypt and elsewhere. Indeed, the discovery of bottles of this kind in ancient Egyptian tombs, where they had doubtless been dropped by accident or design by Arab workmen, started the sensational theory that Chinese porcelain had found its way to Egypt in the days of the Pharaohs. The great antiquity of Chinese porcelain was thought to have been established by these finds, but the bubble was pricked by a sinologue who noticed that verses from a medieval poet were inscribed on these ancient articles, and a truly Pickwickian episode was abruptly terminated.

Plate 69 shows a few typical specimens from the O. C. Raphael Collection, illustrating the variety of form and a few of the many kinds of decoration used, besides the ulterior meaning of the designs. Fig. 8 is a plain vase shape with "robin's egg" glaze. Fig. 7 is of creamy white porcelain of Ting type carved like ivory with figures of the Eighteen Lohan. Fig. 9 is white porcelain deeply carved in relief and openwork with nine lions sporting with balls of brocade (*chiu shih t'ung chü*), a rebus design which connotes the ideal family of "nine sons living together." The gourd (Fig. 1) symbolises longevity and the finger citron (Fig. 4) happiness. In fact these perfect little articles are as purposeful in their designs as they are ingenious in their construction.

CHAPTER X

EUROPEAN INFLUENCES ON CHINESE PORCELAIN

We have noticed from time to time the reactions of European intercourse with China on the porcelain manufacture. With the advance of the 18th century foreign influences became so strong that they demand something more than a passing notice.

In spite of the proverbial exclusiveness of the Chinese and their distrust, not altogether unfounded, of the "Western barbarian," a few Europeans managed to penetrate the interior before the days of Treaty Ports, some reaching Peking itself and actually finding their way to Imperial favour.

Matteo Ricci, who founded the Jesuit Missions in China, died at Peking in 1610, and, probably owing largely to the good name he left behind him, other Jesuits were able to pass the barriers which to most foreigners proved insurmountable. The passports of these men were their skill in mathematics and science, and one of them, Verbiest, was actually appointed to the Board of Astronomy and commanded to supervise the making of a new set of astronomical instruments in 1670. Gherardini and Belleville are reputed to have brought European methods of painting and drawing to the notice of the Chinese artists at Peking; and in the reign of Ch'ien Lung Castiglione and Attiret not only painted pictures for the Emperor but gave advice and assistance in architectural matters.

European clocks and watches, French enamels and Venetian glass found their way to the Court through this intercourse, and we know that the Emperor and his suite delighted in these new-fangled articles. It has already been noted that the Mandarins at Ching-tê Chên begged Père d'Entrecolles to supply them with curious foreign designs which might be translated into porcelain for the delight of the Court; and we see concrete evidence of this interchange of ideas in such specimens as bottles with wing handles modelled from Venetian glass, vases of Italian renaissance forms, puzzle jugs copied from Dutch Delft, and vases in the shape of a tree trunk with amorini at the foot. There are also figures of Europeans such as the well-known pair said to represent Louis XIV and his Queen, the group representing a man with his arm round a lady, and a number of Fukien white figures (see p. 106); but they are often so grotesque that we can only regard them as caricatures. Nor need we dwell on the obviously European shapes of the dinner, tea and coffee services, ewers and basins, jugs, salt-cellars, cruets, candlesticks, and the like, which would naturally be designed to suit the habits of the users. Again the unnecessarily complicated forms of the ornamental porcelain made for the export trade was due to a desire to tickle the foreigner's fancy and had little influence on Chinese taste.

The first signs of European influence in the actual decoration of the ware are observable in the late Ming porcelain, and they are more frequent, though still very uncommon, on the K'ang Hsi porcelain. Armorial devices we can leave for the moment; but it is evident that occasionally the K'ang Hsi blue and white painters had access to European drawings. Plates with a picture of Rotterdam besieged, a vase in the Lady Lever Art Gallery with European ladies disporting themselves on swings, the well-known covered cups with a picture of St. Louis surrounded by praying Chinese figures and inscribed L'EMPIRE DE LA VERTU ETEND JUSQU'AU BOUT DU MONDE, and the dish illustrated in Fig. 3 of Plate 29 are proof of this. But the most interesting specimens of this kind are the Jesuit china. Typical examples of this are a bowl and cup in the British Museum,[1] which are painted in underglaze blue with a crucifix enclosed by ornament of the ordinary Chinese kind. They are obviously of the K'ang Hsi period and doubtless similar to the piece which inspired an interesting paragraph in the 1712 letter of Père d'Entrecolles: "From the debris at a large emporium they brought me a little plate which I treasure more than the finest porcelain made during the last thousand years. In the centre of the plate is painted a crucifix between the Virgin and St. John, and I am told that this kind of porcelain was shipped sometimes to Japan, but that this commerce came to an end sixteen or seventeen years ago. Apparently the Japanese Christians took advantage of this manufacture at the time of the persecution to obtain pictures of our mysteries, and these wares, mingled with others in the crates, eluded the vigilance of the enemies of our religion. This pious artifice was no doubt eventually discovered and rendered useless by more stringent investigation, and that is why the manufacture of this kind of ware has ceased at Ching-tê Chên."

The Chinese, who are extremely tolerant in religious matters, would probably have themselves taken no exception to this Christian decoration, but apparently it was not much used at Ching-tê Chên. Had this kind of ware been freely made for the native Christians, the fact could not have well escaped the notice of Père d'Entrecolles. In any case this early Jesuit china, rendered romantic by the story of the pious artifice, is very rarely seen to-day; and collectors of curiosities consider themselves lucky to secure a specimen of a later type which has perhaps less claim to the title of Jesuit china. This is decorated in on-glaze enamels, probably at Canton, with Biblical subjects copied direct from European paintings and engravings: but the porcelain consists of tea and coffee and table wares of European form and it was doubtless intended for the European trade. It belongs, in fact, to a very large group of porcelains decorated by the Canton enamellers with all manner of European subjects both sacred and profane, which are often interesting and amusing but rarely beautiful. In many of these the Chinese copyist shows his proverbial patience, reproducing the European designs, with which he was evidently supplied by the merchants, with surprising exactitude. There are large dishes, for instance, on which an engraved design is copied line for line in black pencilling, so closely indeed as to look like a transfer-print. In others the interpretation is freer, and here the touch of the Oriental is apparent in the rendering of human faces and figures. There are services with European subjects painted in *famille rose* enamels of the Yung Chêng style, and these are much sought by collectors, especially in Holland; and quite a number of pieces are still to be seen with pictures of Dutch ships, views of famous anchorages such as that of Table Bay, besides subjects of topical interest in Europe such as John Law's Bubble, the 1745 rebellion, John Wilkes, etc. Others again have borrowed their designs from satirical and sporting prints; and there are punch-bowls with harvesting scenes inscribed with the name of the farmer who sent out the order and the date of the occasion, and with a hundred and one subjects. Two punch-bowls in the British Museum have views of the celebrated *hongs* at Canton with the flags of the various European trading companies, to remind us of the place where the Chinese and European traders met to deal with the orders for this and other kinds of goods (Plate 70, Fig. 3).

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[1] See *B.M. Guide*, Figs. 160 and 162.

But the largest and most important section of this group is composed of the armorial porcelain. Services emblazoned with coats-of-arms were very fashionable in Europe in the 18th century; and so long as the European porcelain was in the experimental stage and costly to make, a large trade in this type of goods was carried on in China. It was, of course, necessary to send out drawings of the armorial bearings which were transmitted to the factories through the merchants at Canton. The Chinese had no difficulty in copying these designs and the rendering of the bearings and even of the tinctures will be found as a rule to be astonishingly exact. A displaced or inverted letter in the legends and mottoes occasionally betrays the Oriental copyist; but considering the unfamiliar nature of the writing it is a wonder that mistakes of this kind are so few. The armorial services were executed at first at Ching-tê Chên, and there are a few early K'ang Hsi specimens decorated in underglaze blue alone. One of the earliest is a plate in the Lady Lever Art Gallery[1] which has a shield of arms inconspicuously placed in the midst of pure Chinese designs. The work at this time was evidently unfamiliar, for the armorial bearings are distinctly orientalised. A large blue and white dish in the British Museum with the arms of Talbot marks a decided advance; and in the later K'ang Hsi specimens, decorated in *famille verte* enamels with or without underglaze blue, the armorial bearings seem quite at home, though the subsidiary decoration is still in pure Chinese taste.

One of the interesting features of the armorial porcelain is the fact that much of it can be dated with accuracy from the heraldic bearings. It would, indeed, be possible—and it has been done with some success in the British Museum—to form a series of dated specimens of this kind ranging from the first years of the 18th century onwards to the 19th. The earlier pieces at any rate would give us the clue to the dates of many kinds of Chinese decorations, particularly border patterns and subsidiary designs.

Thus a plate in the British Museum dated 1702 has typical *famille verte* flowers: borders of red and gold scrolls and brocade patterns and the transition enamels (*famille verte* and *famille rose* combined) appear on several pieces which are datable to about 1720: the " Chinese Imari " style is used on a plate which must have been made between 1711 and 1722; and the pencilled style of underglaze blue painting is common on specimens of the Yung Chêng period.

It is evident that about the end of the K'ang Hsi period much of this class of work was transferred from Ching-tê Chên to Canton. Not that the porcelain itself was made at Canton. On the contrary, there is no evidence that any material of this quality was ever made in the Delta; and the white ware was regularly supplied by the Ching-tê Chên manufacturers. But like the " ruby-back " services, it was enamelled in the Canton workshops, and there is no lack of evidence that it was decorated by the very men who painted the " ruby-back " porcelain. The same complicated diaper patterns, the designs of cocks and peonies, the typical floral sprays, the delicate gilt, or black and gilt, scroll borders are common to both on the Yung Chêng wares. From the Ch'ien Lung period onwards, the subsidiary decoration[1] of the armorial porcelain becomes more and more Europeanised, and about the middle of the century the Chinese ornaments tend to be replaced by bouquets and floral sprays in the Meissen style. A little later we see the swags of flowers which figure on Bow and Bristol porcelains, laurel and husk festoons, sinuous borders of ribbon or dotted lines wreathed with flowers, French cornflower sprigs, blue and gilt Derby borders and the like, till there is little of the Oriental left except the paste and glaze.

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[1] See Catalogue No. 134.

It is perhaps small wonder that uncritical eyes mistook this armorial ware for European and looked for European factories on which to father it. But a worse choice than Lowestoft could hardly have been made for this purpose, for the little Suffolk factory had not begun its career till 1751 and it never made any true, hard-paste porcelain of the Chinese type. The true story of the ware is told by such documents as the two bills of lading exhibited in the British Museum for services made for Charles Peers in 1731,[2] which are addressed from Canton. With them are specimens of the actual goods supplied, one a plate pencilled in underglaze blue with a parrot on a rock and flowering plants, and the other a plate enamelled with the arms of Peers and with panels of flowers in the border set in a diaper pattern. These interesting documents were given to the Museum by the present representative of the Peers family.

Another plate in the same collection is vouched for by a similar bill from Canton in 1743: it has the arms of Okeover impaling Nicholl richly emblazoned[3]; and finally there is a plate with arms of Chadwick and a border of Derby blue, which is inscribed *Canton in China, 24th Jany, 1791.* In spite of a high protective duty[4] the Chinese armorial porcelain continued to arrive in England in large quantities up to the first decades of the 19th century; but by this time a satisfactory formula for English porcelain had been evolved in Staffordshire, and the home production was able to meet all the requirements of the market.

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[1] A study of the border patterns on Ch'ien Lung armorial porcelain shows that the following were used at various dates: light feathery scrolls, gilt or in colours, rococo ornaments combined with floral patterns, large shell-like ornaments and scroll-edged frames of lattice diaper loosely strung together, in the first half of the period. More elaborate framework with similar motives interrupted by four peacocks and generally in black and gold, about 1740 to 1760: composite borders with diapers, symbols, flowers, and sometimes butterflies on specimens which range from 1765 to 1820. This last type of border was adapted by English factories as a surround for the well-known "willow pattern," which we may add is itself merely an adaptation of a Chinese landscape.

[2] See *Country Life*, May 20th, 1922.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] In 1803 it was proposed to reduce the import duty on Oriental porcelain by £59 8s. 6d. per cent. Such a reduction, which would have left a mere 50 per cent duty to be paid, was regarded with alarm by the Staffordshire potters. See F. Falkner, *The Wood Family of Burslem*, p. 67.

The Dutch were among the largest importers of Oriental porcelain, both Chinese and Japanese, and the celebrated tin-enamelled pottery of Delft was powerfully influenced both in form and decoration by these Oriental importations. The same traders brought out Delft pottery to the East, either among their personal effects or as trade goods, and it is interesting to find that imitations of it were made both in China and Japan in the 18th century. Stranger still are the Chinese copies of the Delft ware with slightly Europeanised versions of Chinese designs. This phenomenon is illustrated by a supper-set in the British Museum which has semi-Oriental designs of this sort copied, mark and all, from a Delft model.

On the other hand, the china-decorators in Holland and elsewhere in the early years of the 18th century, while European porcelain was still scarce and dear, were in the habit of practising their art on Oriental wares. The white porcelain of Fukien lent itself to this treatment; but failing that, white Ching-tê Chên porcelain with engraved decoration or with slight designs in blue and red was pressed into this service. Some of the work of these *chambrelans*, or private enamellers, is well executed with colours and designs such as one sees on the Delft earthenware, but most of it is feeble in drawing and crude in colouring and the designs are largely imitative of the Kakiemon class of Japanese porcelain. Important exceptions are the rare pieces painted in black or red *camaieu*, heightened with gold, by the German *Hausmäler* such as Preussler, Bottengruber and de Wolfsbourg, who also painted on early Meissen and Vienna porcelain. Their work in the European baroque style is carefully done, and specimens of it are highly valued by collectors. In the middle of the 18th century, when porcelain was sent in large quantities to Canton to be decorated there for the foreign market, it was not difficult for the European traders to obtain pieces of Chinese porcelain " in the white " for their customers; and we still find a number of such pieces which have been painted by Meissen, Chelsea and Worcester artists. Some of them have been experimented on with transfer-prints at Battersea or Worcester. Occasionally, too, porcelain with partial decoration in underglaze blue found its way to Europe in the same manner. This is shown by two pieces in the British Museum, one a tea-pot with blue ground and white panels to which the decoration has never been added, and the other a vase with underglaze blue scrollwork, which must have been executed at Ching-tê Chên, surrounding panels which were evidently painted in Germany. Other rather uncommon members of this group have designs cut by European lapidaries: they are generally monochrome-blue porcelains or the red stoneware of Yi-hsing. The latter is often polished, as well as engraved, in the manner of the red ware which was made by Böttger at Dresden.

Finally there is the unpleasing type of *clobbered* porcelain. The ugly name of clobbering has been fitly given to the practice of adding superfluous enamels to Chinese porcelain which was already adequately decorated in underglaze blue or red. A classic instance of this is a bottle in the British Museum painted in good style with three Chinese mythical animals in underglaze red. This simple but effective decoration has been ruined by a clobberer who has added murderous-looking European figures threatening the perfectly benevolent animals with clubs. But the chief victims of the clobberer are blue and white porcelains. One feels that there must have been a severe reaction from the fashion for blue and white, when the clobberer was encouraged, as he must have been, to trick out good K'ang Hsi specimens with meaningless additions in red, green and yellow enamels. Not content with filling up every vacant space in the Chinese design with these barbarous daubs, he often added a garbled Chinese seal in red on the base to show that he had caught the true Oriental spirit. Yet such defacement was tolerated for quite a prolonged period in England; and, more discreditable still, a few English porcelain painters actually descended low enough to copy this hybrid stuff.

CHAPTER XI

THE PORCELAIN OF FUKIEN

Porcelain was made in several districts of China, but the native writers tell us little about it except that it was inferior to that of Ching-tê Chên. In fact the only type of provincial ware, of which we have any considerable number of specimens, is that made at Tê-hua (Tehwa), which is situated not many miles from Amoy in the province of Fukien. The European traders at Amoy made this ware familiar to our ancestors in the 17th and 18th centuries, and the French distinguished it as *blanc de Chine*. It is a very attractive white porcelain, sometimes milk white, sometimes cream white and occasionally warmed with a rosy tinge. It is, moreover, glassy and translucent and the glaze has a soft melting appearance which has been aptly compared with that of milk jelly or blancmange. The body and glaze blend closely together, and it is not easy to say where the body ends and glaze begins. Such is the general appearance of the Fukien ware, but there are exceptional pieces of which the glaze has become crazed and stained by infiltration and these have almost the appearance of buff crackle.

The early history of the Fukien porcelain was given in *Wares of the Ming Dynasty*, and it is only necessary to repeat here that the industry was in existence at the end of the Ming period. It is still in existence to-day, and an English missionary[1] writing in 1885 describes his own impressions of the busy district with " pottery, pottery everywhere, in the fields, in the streets, in the shops." We may add that the nature of the ware has undergone little change in the last three hundred years; and, as it is mostly white and with little decoration except moulded or applied reliefs and slight incised designs, it will always be difficult to distinguish the productions of the different periods.

Most of the Fukien porcelain is of an ornamental or semi-ornamental kind, and the ware seems to have been specially suitable for moulded designs and figures. Some of the choicest specimens are figures, usually of deities or mythological beings, but also very human representations of ordinary mortals and among them Europeans. Animals and birds, too, play their part, hawks, cocks, dogs, and the Buddhist lions which are usually fitted with small tubes to carry joss-sticks. The semi-ornamental objects include incense-vases and incense-burners, boxes, libation cups shaped after bronze models or carved rhinoceros horn, wine-cups formed like flowers, various kinds of water-vessels, water droppers and other accessories of the writing-table, and occasionally vases. There are also teapots, wine-ewers and bowls, and more rarely plain cups and dishes; and some little attempt seems to have been made to compete with the Ching-tê Chên manufacturers in supplying the foreign market with useful wares for the table and domestic purposes. We know, for instance, of globular mugs with straight ribbed necks, cylindrical mugs, plain coffee cups and porringers which are so manifestly based on European forms that collectors have been tempted to ascribe them to European manufactories such as Meissen and Fulham.[1] In this connection it is interesting to recall the account given (in 1712) by Père d'Entrecolles of certain Ching-tê Chên potters who transferred their plant to Fukien in the hope of making profits out of the Western traders at Amoy. The venture, however, was not successful.

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[1] *Everyday Life in China, or Scenes in Fukien*, by E. J. Dukes, London, 1885.

Some idea of the Fukien porcelain of the K'ang Hsi period can be gathered from the Dresden Collection,[2] which includes quite a large series of the white cups, ornamental vessels and figures. But they only confirm the opinion that to distinguish the different periods of the ware is no easy matter. Both the milk-white and cream-white varieties are represented, and, though many of the specimens are of good quality, there are enough second-rate pieces to prove that quality alone cannot be regarded as a determining factor in dating the ware. Incidentally, it will be noticed that many of the figures of Kuan-yin and other deities have at some time been covered with oil gilding, which was applied over a black medium. Most of this covering has now disappeared, but traces of the black and occasionally of the gold are still visible. The old Fukien models can often be identified from the European porcelain of the early 18th century, for the *blanc de Chine* was freely copied in the French factories of St. Cloud, Mennecy, and elsewhere, as well as at Meissen and in the early Bow and Chelsea wares of England. Teapots with panel designs in sunk relief, or with bodies shaped like fruits, and cups and bowls with sprigs of prunus in applied relief, reflect common Fukien types; and occasionally we find European figures which have been actually moulded from Fukien originals, a fact which is betrayed in one rare instance[3] by the mark of a Fukien potter appearing on the back.

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[1] The stoneware made by Dwight of Fulham in the latter part of the 17th century sometimes has the same shapes, which are probably derived from silver, but there is no evidence that Dwight ever made porcelain. [2] See Zimmermann, *op. cit.*, Plates 153–56.

[3] A figure of (?) Lü Tung-pin made at Lowdin's factory at Bristol in 1750: it has a mark on the back which apparently consists of a character read *Lei*.

As already implied, the decoration of the Fukien porcelain usually consists of moulded or applied reliefs, sometimes in sunk panels, and it is mostly of a simple nature, such as a sprig of prunus, a deer or horse, figures of Immortals or a band of stiff leaves. Incised ornament is also used, and very often it takes the form of a verse or aphorism in five or seven characters. But apart from these embellishments the vessels are generally moulded in ingenious and often very attractive shapes, derived from bronze or horn or natural objects such as flowers and leaves. Of the Fukien figures the most familiar is that of Kuan-yin. Indeed, one would say that there must have been a white Kuan-yin in every house in China. The story of Kuan-yin is told elsewhere, and she appears in many guises in Fukien porcelain. But as the Goddess of Mercy, and as Kuan-yin the maternal, with a child in her arms, she must have had countless devotees in China. Other favourite figures are Kuan Ti, god of war, Bodhidharma, the Taoist Immortals and the Twin Genii; and there are many others which make a similar appeal to religious sentiment or superstition. There are, besides, little groups representing scenes from romance, or fairy stories like that of Wang Chih and the game of checkers; but perhaps the most interesting to the Western collector are those single figures and groups which represent Europeans in the East. There is a passage in the writings of one of the Jesuit missionaries in 1604[1] which speaks of the delight taken by the Chinese in caricaturing European manners. Actors from Macao, we are told, caricatured the Portuguese "for the things which the Chinese hated, such as the wearing of short garments which seemed ridiculous, praying on beads by men in the temples with swords girded on them and kneeling on one knee, their quarrels with one another and combats, women going with men in company, and the like."

The Fukien potters are on the whole more complimentary. If their versions of the European are not exactly models of grace, they do not at any rate seem to aim at making him ridiculous. Indeed, in some cases they treat him with uncalled-for respect, placing him in a shrine which should have been occupied by a Buddha or on a kylin as though he were an Arhat. There are little figures of Dutch soldiers and men in civilian dress made in the best quality of the ware which seem to be honest attempts to represent the true character. One pair of such figures are thought to represent the Dutch envoys, Goya and De Keyser, who journeyed to Peking in 1655; but this, of course, is a mere conjecture.

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[1] *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, Hakluyt, extra Series, Vol. XII, p. 482.

In the early years of the 18th century when the European china painters had difficulty in finding home-made material for their work, the white Fukien ware offered a convenient medium; and we often meet to-day cups and bowls and other objects with the relief decoration touched with colour or the plain surface filled with painted designs. The European brushwork and enamels are generally recognisable by their style; but there are some pieces with sketchy floral ornament in green and red which might equally well be rough Oriental work. We know that the Fukien potters did occasionally indulge in enamelled decoration. There are pieces with typical late Ming enamels rather roughly executed, and Mr. Dukes[1] who visited the potteries about 1880, speaks of children, in the open air, painting cups; and again a late Chinese work[2] refers to the Tê-hua porcelain in the following terms: "When the glaze is white like jade, glossy and lustrous, rich and thick, with a reddish tinge, and the biscuit heavy, the ware is of first quality . . . enamelled specimens are second rate."

Various rules have been suggested for distinguishing modern Fukien ware from old. Greater opacity, a glazed base, etc., have been indicated as signs of modern work; but all these rules of thumb break down in practice and we can only judge the ware by its fineness of modelling, texture, and finish. Even so, it is doubtful if the most practised judges will be able to distinguish the really good modern specimens from the old. It is common knowledge that admirable figures made in quite recent times have been sold for large sums in Peking, and doubtless some of them have had equal success in Europe. On the other hand, a very good figure was recently shown by a London dealer who had bought it in China at a price which seemed only applicable to modern work; but it was so well modelled and of such good quality that one could easily have passed it as "antique." In fact, the only suspicious feature that it seemed to have was a square mark on the back with the characters *Tê-hua*.

Marks are not common on the Fukien ware and it is doubtful if the place-name was ever used in the earlier periods; but we do find occasional makers' names on 18th-century pieces, such as the seal on the back of the figure copied in 1750 at Bristol (see p. 105). A few of the potters' names have been identified, e.g. Lai-kuan, Ho Chao-tsung, etc.; but it is always difficult to read the seals which are obscured by the thick glaze. Apocryphal Ming date-marks such as Hsüan Tê and Ch'êng Hua were sometimes used, and a fret, whorl or swastika are occasionally seen under cups and libation bowls which belong to the early Ch'ing period.

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[1] *loc. cit.*

[2] *Li t'a k'an k'ao ku ou pien*, published in 1877.

There is a good series of Fukien porcelains in the British Museum and some exceptionally fine figures in the Salting Collection. The two pieces illustrated on Plates 75 and 49 are an admirable figure of Kuan-yin standing on a crayfish, and a brush-washer artistically modelled in the form of a lotus leaf on which are two frogs.

CHAPTER XII

POTTERY OF THE CH'ING DYNASTY

If we except the Canton and Yi-hsing stonewares, very little of the pottery made in China during the Ch'ing dynasty has been seriously considered by collectors in this country. It is true that collectors of Ming and early wares are bound to take notice of certain types which pass current for Ming without much justification. Most of these have been discussed in the *Wares of the Ming Dynasty*. But apart from them the subject of Chinese pottery suffers from a neglect which is not confined to the Western world. We see much of it but know little about it, and the Chinese themselves have not condescended to enlighten us. Yet a glance at the Maritime Customs Reports and such books as Wells Williams' *Chinese Commercial Guide*, which was published in 1863, show that pottery forms a considerable item of trade in the neighbourhood of almost every Treaty Port; and occasionally we have a word about the industry from other sources.

The high cost of freight makes it improbable that the distribution of this relatively cheap material, except in the case of a few popular wares, had a very wide radius. Each district has its potteries which provide tiles for its buildings and pots for everyday use, but it is unlikely that any of these wares travelled far unless the potteries happened to be near the ports or main waterways. We shall probably be near the mark if we look to the vicinity of the ports for the source of the miscellaneous Chinese wares which are found in India, the East Indies and to a less extent in Europe; and doubtless the same potteries which figure in the Customs Reports of the last sixty years provided wares of a similar nature during the whole period covered by this volume.

Taking the coastal provinces in order from the South we hear of potteries in Kwangtung at Yamchow, near the treaty port Pakhoi, at Kiungchow in Hainan, at Yang-chiang (Yeungkong), in the Canton Delta, and by Swatow and Chaochowfu. A hint as to the nature of the ware made near Pakhoi in the middle of the 19th century is given in the Customs Reports.[1] "The ware comprises vases, incense-pots, bowls, teapots, plates, etc., or any domestic article in two shades of terra-cotta—light and dark—ornamented with appropriate figures and characters in Chinese style. . . . The glazed surface is produced by rubbing with wax and polishing with wood and pumice stone after baking."

The trade returns of the Canton Delta show that pottery was exported from about a dozen ports on the east and west sides. Grotesque figures, incense burners and miscellaneous objects with buff pottery or stoneware body and patchy glazes of brown and yellow and occasionally turquoise blue and aubergine, ginger jars and the like, all of which come from this neighbourhood, are probably the output of various minor potteries. But the best known wares of the Delta are those made at Shekwan, near the great manufacturing town of Fatshan. This, the Canton stoneware, dates back beyond the Ch'ing dynasty and was discussed in the *Wares of the Ming Dynasty ;* but, as stated there, early specimens are rare and exceptional, and the bulk of the Canton ware met in Europe and America is of comparatively modern date.

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[1] *Maritime Customs Reports*, 1892–1901, p. 422.

Generally speaking the Canton stoneware is a hard-fired ware appearing dark brown at the base, but varying at times to pale yellowish grey or buff, and with a thick smooth flocculent glaze heavily mottled and dappled. The colour varies much, but it is often blue, flecked and streaked with grey-green or white over a substratum of olive-brown : again, it is green with grey and blue mottling and at times the brown tints predominate. Vases with these mottled "heather-mixture" glazes sometimes bear the seal-marks of potters such as Ko Ming-hsiang and Ko Yüan-hsiang, who appear to have lived in the 18th century.

Another Canton type, which is often erroneously attributed to the Ming period and earlier, has a rich red *flambé* or a celadon-green glaze : the ware in this case is white and porcellanous, but liable to burn a deep brownish red in the exposed parts. It usually takes the form of ornamental objects, groups and figures. Other Kwangtung wares copying the old Chün Chou glazes have been discussed in the Ming volume of this series, and we need not enlarge on them here. This early work was sufficiently appreciated to be copied at the Imperial factory at Ching-tê Chên in the Yung Chêng period ;[1] and the ware was still in great demand in 1863[2] when the Shekwan potteries were supplying the Canton market with "pots, dishes, and jars of every needed shape and size, some of the latter as large as hogsheads, glazed and unglazed, together with a large variety of imitation grotto work and figures for gardens, gallipots, little images, etc."

Extensive potteries exist at Fungkai, between Swatow and Chaochowfu, where there are beds of kaolin as well as of the commoner clays. The objects made here and doubtless exported from Swatow are described as "pottery of every description, from common earthenware to finely finished articles with coloured glazes or enamels : cups for tea and wine, bowls, dishes and plates, stoves of red terra-cotta, pierced plaques for windows, and immense stoneware jars holding 100 to 150 litres." Besides the earthenware, we are told that a course porcelain was made in large quantities in this district.[1]

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[1] See p. 64.

[2] S. Wells Williams, *The Chinese Commercial Guide*, p. 13.

Wares of a very similar nature, including "dishes, rice-bowls, wine-cups, saucers, spoons, preserve jars, wine bottles, etc., in common porcelain" have long been an object of trade between Amoy, in Fukien, and Indo-China, the East Indies and India. Shih-ma and Tung-an Hsien in the immediate neighbourhood may have supplied the goods; and we may look to the factories by Swatow and Amoy for the origin of much of the coarse and archaic-looking blue and white and coloured ware, which is picked up to-day in India and the Eastern Archipelago and not infrequently passed off as antique. Amoy was of old a place of export for the white porcelain of Tê-hua, and doubtless the same ware still comes into the market both here and at the port of Chüanchowfu.

Ningpo in Chekiang still figures in the Consular Reports as exporting "china ware, fine"; but it is not clear where the ware is made. We need not dwell on the Yangtze ports of Kukiang, Wuhu and Nanking, all of which have from time to time traded largely in the porcelain of Ching-tê Chên; but the mention of Changsha in Hunan (on a tributary of the Yangtze beyond Hankow) as a distributing centre of "fine porcelain" seems to point to a porcelain industry in Hunan. Shanghai has long exported the pottery made in Southern Kiangsu. This includes buff pottery bowls and incense-burners, etc., with opaque, minutely crackled, camellia-leaf green glaze for which the potteries at Kashan were noted in the 17th and 18th centuries, and the red and other-coloured stonewares of Yi-hsing, which were almost as well known in Europe at the end of the 17th century as the Ching-tê Chên porcelain itself.

Yi-hsing (Ihing) on the west side of the Great Lake has been celebrated for its potteries since the early part of the 16th century. The outlines of its ceramic history were sketched in the *Wares of the Ming Dynasty* and a brief reference to the subsequent productions is all that is needed here. The commonest type of Yi-hsing ware is an unglazed stoneware usually red, but also chocolate-brown, buff, drab, black-brown, and sometimes speckled. It was decorated by moulding, applying stamped or moulded ornaments and engraving with a point: and, in later periods especially, it was often glazed or painted with *famille rose* enamels. All manner of objects, useful and ornamental, were made at Yi-hsing, but it is specially noted for its tea-wares; and we may assume that Yi-hsing ware was first introduced into Europe with the beverage tea in the last half of the 17th century. Our ancestors called it "buccaro" as though it were in some way connected with the American-Indian ware of that name; and among the first tea-wares made by European potters were close imitations of the so-called "red buccaro." Judging from these copies and from the good series of Yi-hsing wares in the Dresden Collection,[1] the early Ch'ing types were cleverly and often fancifully shaped, resembling sections of trees with applied foliage and spouts and handles shaped like twigs, bundles of bamboo canes, fruits like the peach (Plate 76, Fig. 3) and citron, lotus seed-pods and leaves, birds and animals, etc.; or again they had the usual square, hexagonal, or rounded shapes with moulded designs borrowed from bronze or porcelain, or applied sprigs of prunus (Plate 76, Fig. 2), and even panels of openwork: others again are incised with various designs, including ornamental inscriptions which often exhibit much calligraphical skill. Potters' marks and seals are freely used; but, as it has been a common practice to imitate the marks of the celebrated Ming potters, they are not always a safe guide. Indeed it is no easy matter to distinguish the modern Yi-hsing ware from the old, for the potters have lost little of their cunning and have faithfully adhered to the old designs. In these circumstances an historic collection like that in the Johanneum at Dresden[2] is of peculiar interest.

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[1] In *The Wares of the Ming Dynasty*, p. 161, a type of coarse porcelain, distinguished by an iron-red biscuit and accretions of sand and grit on the base, was discussed at some length and a Corean origin among others was suggested for it. It now transpires that this ware is known among Chinese dealers as Swatow ware. This statement is based on hearsay, but it is worth noting.

The enamelled Yi-hsing wares are usually rather coarse and in the *famille rose* style. The glazed wares include imitations of the old Chün Chou glazes which were discussed in our Ming volume. These date back to the early 17th century and were honoured by imitation at the Imperial porcelain factories in the Yung Chêng period.[3] There are also opaque enamels used as glazes to cover the whole surface, the most usual being a light bluish green which is sometimes specked with pink like the "robin's egg" glaze: and there are streaky greenish glazes with a peculiar silken sheen, which appear on modern wares but are apt to be taken for early types.

The Shantung ports were doubtless supplied by the numerous potteries in the Poshan and Yenchowfu districts. Poshan is best known for its glass works, but it has had extensive potteries from early times, the decayed slate of the district providing excellent clay. A Government factory for glazed pottery was started there at the end of the last century. It produced " vases of all shapes and dimensions, jars, flower-stands, flower-pots, etc., in two colours—a bluish grey and tea colour—perfect in form and glazing and looking like porcelain."

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[1] See Zimmermann, *op. cit.*, Plate 157.

[2] cf. *C.P.P.*, Plate 50.

[3] See p. 64.

Earthenware appears among the exports of many of the coast towns of Chihli, but we know little of the local wares so listed. There are, however, large pottery centres still active such as those at Liu-li-chü near Peking, and at Tz'ŭ Chou in the extreme south of the province. The Tz'ŭ Chou wares with their creamy glaze and freely sketched designs in black and brown slip or again with graffiato ornament and designs cut out of a dark brown glaze, have been made for many centuries and are familiar to collectors of early Chinese wares. Their whole story, including the more modern developments, is told in the two previous volumes of this series.

The potteries near Peking have supplied that great centre with tiles and earthenwares since the Yüan period. Their modern productions, as seen in an instructive collection of modern Chinese pottery in the Field Museum, Chicago, include pottery with incised designs filled with green, yellow and aubergine glazes in Ming style, and wares shaped like bronzes and with a shining green glaze. Another type is described by Bushell[1] as having a reddish-brown glaze of marked iridescence, shining with an infinity of metallic specks. A specimen of this kind in the British Museum, with formal ornament moulded in relief, has the mark of the Tao Kuang period. We understand, too, that monochrome vases with turquoise and aubergine glazes on a pottery body are still successfully made in the tileworks here, as they doubtless are elsewhere.

It would be a long and useless task to review the pottery centres in the inland provinces as we have practically no information as to the character of their productions and, indeed, are not very likely to come in contact with them. There are, however, a few types which are fairly familiar in Europe, about which something must be said.

The buff stoneware or pottery ornaments, vases and figures, with moulded designs and patches of turquoise, green, and sometimes aubergine glazes, seem to be common to many districts. They are apparently shipped from the Kwangtung and Fukien ports, and the modern series in the Field Museum shows that they are also made to-day (and doubtless have been for generations) at Ma-chuang, near T'ai-yüan Fu, in Shansi. Other modern potteries at Yo Chou in Shensi make black painted ware in Tz'ŭ Chou style and greyish white with sketchy designs in blue.

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[1] *O.C.A.*, p. 637.

Tiles, roof finials, and architectural ornaments in glazed pottery form a considerable group, in which may be included garden vases and large figures for external decoration made and decorated with similar materials. Many of these are skilfully modelled and form admirable ornaments when detached from their surroundings. They are habitually described as Ming, but it is well to remember that many of the buildings from which they have been taken were erected in the Manchu dynasty, such as those in the Yüan Ming Yüan, near Peking, built by Ch'ien Lung with help from the Jesuits, Attiret and Castiglione. These, it well be noted, show the hand of the European in the designs of their mouldings. The pavilions here and the Temple of Heaven at Peking are mainly Manchu structures, and the Great Lama Temple at Peking was built in the early years of the Ch'ing dynasty. And apart from comparatively recent foundations, many of the older buildings have undergone restorations within our present period.

CHAPTER XIII

CHINESE CERAMIC SHAPES

Looking through a collection of picked K'ang Hsi porcelain, such as that given by Mr. Salting to the Victoria and Albert Museum, one is struck by the simple beauty of the wheel-made forms, especially of those pieces which are obviously in the pure native taste. We can leave aside for the moment the moulded forms which are necessarily more complex, and the vases and other ornamental objects made for the export trade which we know were often intentionally eccentric and bizarre. The splendid vases with *famille noire* decoration or with brocaded designs in *famille verte* enamels, the powder-blues and the finer blue-and-whites ring the changes on a comparatively small number of shapes. There is the *yen yen* vase with baluster body and tall neck with flaring mouth (Plate 13); the beautiful *kuan-yin* vase with slender ovoid body, short contracted neck and mouth slightly spreading (Plate 30); the *rouleau* or club-shaped vase, which the Chinese call *chih ch'ui p'ing* or paper-beater, with cylindrical body and straight, narrow neck with slightly spreading mouth (Plate 45); the wide ovoid jar, or potiche, with dome-shaped cover, and the slender ovoid jars with rounded caps; the slender beaker with straight sides, or with a swelling belt in the middle, and flaring mouth (Plate 31, Fig. 2); and a great variety of bottle shapes. Such are the chief wheel-made shapes of K'ang Hsi vases, excluding vessels designed for special purposes which will be considered later; but all of them admit of variations, according to the mood and fancy of the potter. The club-shaped vase, for instance, varies much in the length and proportion of the body and it is sometimes attenuated to a positively daring extent. The bottle-shaped vase, which is perhaps the commonest of all, goes through innumerable minor changes, while preserving its distinctive K'ang Hsi character. The bottle-shape is common to all periods, but there is an indefinable something about the K'ang Hsi bottle which the connoisseur recognises instinctively though he may find it difficult to explain. Whether it be the sprinkler with long tapering neck, the pear-shaped bottle, the globular bottle with straight neck, with or without a bulbous mouth, the bottle with depressed body and wide straight neck, the double gourd or the high-shouldered, dagoba-shaped bottle, it has always a sense of proportion, truth of potting and beauty of line which are unmistakable. Again, there is a typical Ch'ien Lung bottle which has a globular body and wide straight neck, but it differs somehow from the K'ang Hsi type. Perhaps it is that the neck is habitually shorter, giving the whole a squatter appearance: but the difference, whatever it is, is manifest to the trained eye.

If the genius of the K'ang Hsi potter is manifest in his wheel-work, his manipulative skill is no less apparent in the handling of the difficult square and polygonal shapes. Most of the rounded vase-forms have their counterparts in this kind of shape, which is built up with flat slabs of clay accurately cut and deftly fitted together. Great pains must be taken to make the joints true and firm and to keep the form so nicely balanced that it will not sink in the firing. Some of the square vases, with appropriate designs such as the flowers of the four seasons on the four sides, and the pear-shaped vases with flattened sides, are of great elegance. But in this kind of work and in the moulded pieces with many lobes and flutes, the shapes tend to become exuberant and florid. This is especially noticeable in the wares made for export, the shapes of which, inspired by eccentricity rather than good taste, are often needlessly complicated. Many of these are built up in tiers combining square and rounded forms; the lines are disturbed by lobes and leaf-shaped mouldings, fantastic handles and excrescences of various kinds; the double gourd becomes triple; the bulbs on the necks of bottles are multiplied, and the *yen yen* vase culminates in a complete beaker which replaces the usual straight neck with flaring mouth.

Among the objects designed for daily use there are bowls in great variety. The typical K'ang Hsi bowl has rounded sides and lip gracefully spreading outwards, but this shape is varied by moulded flutings and octagonal, hexagonal and square designs. There are also deep scrap-bowls with straight sides and rounded covers, and wide-mouthed bowls with flanged rims on which rests a cover shaped like an inverted saucer. There are cups of several kinds, some tall and slender, others tiny bowl-shaped vessels to hold a sip of wine. They are usually without handles, and, though the cup with handle is an old Chinese institution, it rarely appears at this time except on services made for the foreign market. Special kinds of cups were used for ceremonial purposes, libation cups and marriage cups, but these are generally of fanciful forms, copied from bronze or horn and usually fitted with handles in the form of archaic dragons (Plates 33 and 34). The Chinese dish is usually saucer-shaped with rounded sides. Many of them are of large size, and in the K'ang Hsi period they sometimes have a wide, grooved foot-rim. More ornamental forms are those of the sweetmeat dishes moulded in petals like an open lotus flower, and of the supper sets which are composed of a number of trays fitting together in the form of a circle, a hexagon, an octagon, or a flower. Dishes and plates with wide, flat rims suitable for holding condiments are a type learnt from the European. Ewers are commonly of the graceful Persian form (*hu p'ing*), with pear-shaped body and long, slender spout and handle (Plate 42): but there are others more fancifully shaped, resembling peaches, melons, gourds, etc.; and there are the tall syrup-ewers of cylindrical form with banded sides and tiara tops. There are teapots of simple globular shape, others with bamboo mouldings or shaped like lotus flowers, or kettle-shaped with square bodies and applied openwork panels, and many other ingenious designs.

The regulation altar set consists of an incense-burner, usually a tripod bowl of bronze form, two pricket candlesticks, and two flower vases: and there is a smaller set comprising an incense burner or tazza-shaped bowl for flowers and a pair of lions fitted with tubes to hold incense-sticks. Vases are sometimes made in pairs, but the sets of five—three covered jars and two beakers—were only made for the European mantelpiece.

Tall cylinders or square-sided tubes were used for holding arrows. They were often beautifully decorated and fitted into stands with railed tops. Vases for holding divination rods were shaped after the ancient jade *ts'ung* used in the worship of Earth, with square bodies and round necks and bases. There are lanterns of round or angular shapes made of finely enamelled eggshell porcelain, sometimes with pierced panels; and we read of more freakish light-holders moulded in the form of animals, such as the cat with eyes through which the light shone at night to scare the mice.

There are elegantly pierced boxes and hanging vases for holding perfumed herbs to scent the room, and square straight-sided pots with openwork sides for similar use. Some of these with covered tops have been called cricket pots and butterfly cages, but their construction belies these names as the insects would inevitably escape through the perforations. The real pot for holding fighting crickets seems to have been more of the ginger-jar shape, and the perforations to admit the necessary amount of air were doubtless in the cover: but it would not be structurally impossible for the square covered bowl on Plate 53 to serve the purpose.

Mention has been made of plaques and slabs of porcelain used for inlaying in screens and furniture. Porcelain was also used for making cool head-rests and hat-stands; and in both these cases the objects are hollow and capable of being filled with hot or cold water or perfumed herbs. For garden use there were the fish-bowls, often of monstrous size, which have already been described, and barrel-shaped seats.

The *T'ao shuo* gives a long list of the porcelain forms made in the Ch'ien Lung period. Many of them are, of course, common to the earlier and later reigns; but some will be recognised as specialities of the Yung Chêng and Ch'ien Lung periods, in particular those which are based on antique porcelains and bronzes. "During these latter years," the passage runs,[1] "the ancient ritual vessels, the *tsun*, *lei*, *yi*, *ting*, *yu*, and *chüo* have all been reproduced in porcelain." Of these the *tsun* are wine-jars of various shapes, the *yu* wine-jars with covers and arched handles, the *ting* cauldrons with three or four feet, and the *chüo* libation cups, often helmet-shaped, with three slender legs. "For the library of the scholar there are provided the pallet (*mo yen*), the ink-rest, and the water-pot (*shui ch'êng*); scroll-picture mounts, book-stands, and paper-weights: each adapted for its appropriate use. For the hair-pencil of Chung-shan there is made first the handle, then the bath, a bed for it to lie upon, a frame to hold it, and a cylinder vase (*pi t'ung*) for it to stand up in. There are copies of the double stroked carved jade-seals of the Han dynasty, with handles fashioned like camels, tortoises, dragons or tigers, like linked rings, or tiles; besides boxes for the seal colour, square, round, and many sided. All these things are designed for the use of the clever writer."

The dainty little vessels for the writing-table are among the most delightful works of the Chinese potter, who lavished on them all his skill and artistry. The water droppers (*shui ti*) are of all kinds of curious shapes, floral and animal; and the brush washers (*hsi*) and dishes for holding water are ingeniously formed in the shape of lotus leaves and flowers, fruits and shells. The brush rest (*pi ko*) is commonly in the shape of a conventional range of hills, but it occurs in many other forms: see Plate 73. There are, besides, boxes to hold the seals, ink-screens (*yen p'ing*) behind which the ink is rubbed, miniature incense-burners and vessels to hold the incense and the incense-burning tools, and tiny vases for a single spray of flowers. Illustrations of most of these objects will be seen on Plates 71 to 74.

Vases for holding flowers were made, we are told, in sizes ranging from 2 or 3 in. high up to 5 or 6 ft., and in various shapes, among which are named the *tsun* with flat sides and angles in relief, and the cylindrical vase shaped like a joint of bamboo; while others were square like a corn measure, and others cut in halves, as it were, and with back flattened so as to hang against a wall.

There were round bowls like Buddhist alms-bowls with contracted mouth to hold the pieces for the game of checkers : incense-burners (*lu*) " plaited in a hundred folds, or divided by partitions, with ears in the form of eels, of ropes or of halberds, some six-sided, others square, with straight legs or mounted upon pomegranates. Some are designed in the form of oranges, or of silk bags. They are coloured wax-yellow, tea-green, gold-brown, or the tint of old Lama books, a solace to the eyes in moments of leisure."

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[1] See Bushell, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

Objects of daily use included rice-spoons, tea-spoons, sets of chopsticks, candle-snuff receptacles, vinegar-pots, washing basins, oil-lamps and pricket candlesticks, flower-pots and saucers, round jars with small mouths (*wêng*) or with large mouths (*po*), plates, and bowls of all kinds. Among the personal objects mentioned are head-scratchers, hair-pins, ear-rings, covered boxes of all kinds to hold scents, cosmetics, etc., walking-stick handles and snuff-bottles. For the table service there were teapots and wine-vessels, bowls and dishes of innumerable forms, such as rice-bowls (*wan*), shallow bowls for soup, tea-bowls with saucer-shaped covers which were tilted slightly to allow the tea to pass.

In conclusion we are told that, in accordance with the Ch'ien Lung taste, for models of form good examples were chosen from the Ting Chou, Ju Chou, Kuan and Ko wares of the Sung dynasty, from the Hsüan Tê, Ch'êng Hua and Chia Ching porcelain of the Ming dynasty and from *Fo-lang* enamels.

It is unnecessary to add that figures of all kinds were moulded in the round, but the subjects which they represent belong rather to the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DESIGNS ON CHINESE POTTERY AND PORCELAIN

The designs used to decorate the Ch'ing porcelain are derived from silk brocades, pictures on silk and paper, book illustrations and the decoration on other ornamental substances such as carved wood, ivory and jade, ink-cakes, bronzes and lacquer. All these sources had been already tapped in the Ming dynasty and there must have been a large accumulation of classified designs ready to hand at Ching-tê Chên in the form of pattern books to say nothing of the existing specimens of old porcelain which could be used as models.

It is hardly likely that we shall have the good luck to come across one of the actual pattern books, used, let us say, by the K'ang Hsi potters: but there are a few general books of designs in the British Museum which might well have served the Chinese porcelain decorator, just as the *Artist's Vade Mecum, The Ladies' Amusement,* and the *Compleat Drawing-Book* served his fellows in the West. One such book entitled *The Art of Drawing, in four Sections* (*hua chuan ssŭ chi*) by Ting Kao contains rather more than a hundred figures of divinities and legendary beings, many of which occur in porcelain decoration and ceramic sculpture. Another similar work is the *Hua chuan san chi* (a collection of drawings in three volumes); and again there is the *Chieh tzŭ yüan hua chuan,*[1] Drawing-book of the Mustard Seed Garden, by Li Li-wêng.

It is known, too, that pictures of agriculture, rice-planting and sericulture which occasionally appear on porcelain were taken direct from the Official Manuals published to promote these industries. Brocade designs are seen at every turn, whether it be on the sumptuous *famille verte* vases which are literally clothed in rich brocades with spaces cut out for panel decoration, or in the broad and narrow border patterns which might be strips of brocade cut off and applied to the porcelain. The bronze designs are apparent on many vessels modelled after bronze forms, especially in the Ch'ien Lung period, and decorated with archaic dragon and phœnix patterns, ogre heads, meanders and stiff leaves.

But in general, porcelain designs are classified by the Chinese under four comprehensive headings—*jên wu,* figure, or genre, subjects; *shan shui,* landscape; *hua niao,* nature subjects (lit. flowers and birds); and *tsa hua,* miscellaneous designs. The first, which includes figure subjects of all kinds, is by far the most intriguing to the European mind. Our curiosity is aroused by the strange scenes depicted, in which the actors, sometimes elegant and graceful figures, sometimes uncouth and even grotesque, live and move in a setting which is utterly foreign to the Western eye. Unfortunately it is not possible to satisfy this natural curiosity in many, perhaps the majority, of cases, for even the Chinese themselves can rarely give the true story of the scenes depicted on their wares.

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[1] See F. Perzynski, *Burlington Magazine,* March, 1913, p. 310.

The Manchus were a race of warriors before too long enjoyment of the sweets of power sapped their virility; and the earlier wares of the dynasty were often decorated to suit their taste with scenes of combat and military pomp. The half legendary heroes of the Han dynasty and of the Three Kingdoms, the fights with bandits told in the *Shui hu chuan* of the Sung dynasty—the Chinese Knights of the Round Table and Robin Hoods—appear on the K'ang Hsi *famille verte*. Again, a vase with military figures (*wu p'ing*) is sometimes paired with another on which a civil procession is depicted (*wên p'ing*). On other pieces historic persons and scenes are depicted—Yao with his cavalcade calling the Emperor Shun, like another Cincinnatus, from the plough: Su Wu, the faithful Han minister, tending cattle in captivity among the Hiung-nu; Chang Ch'ien, another Han minister, whose travels have grown into legends, tracing the source of the Yellow River in the Milky Way and reaching the realms of the Weaving Maiden herself[1]; the boy Ssŭ-ma Kuang liberating his drowning companion from a huge water-kong, by breaking its side; the meeting of Ming Huang and the celebrated beauty Yang Kuei-fei[2]; Hsi Shih, the Delilah of Fu Ch'ai, a prince of Wu in the 5th century; Chiang Tzŭ-ya, fishing on the river-bank; and Chu Mai-ch'ên, the woodcutter who rose to be a minister, reading as he walks with a bundle of faggots on his back.

There are appropriate designs to appeal to the man of letters:—symposia of literary personages, the Seven Worthies who met in the Bamboo Grove, and the Worthies of the Orchid Pavilion who set their cups floating down the "nine-bend river." Both were coteries of celebrated literati, poets and calligraphers, who lived the former in the 3rd and the latter in the 4th century. Another favourite in this kind of decoration was the bibulous T'ang poet Li T'ai-po, who is represented gazing at the waterfalls of Szechwan, receiving menial ministrations from the Emperor and his court, or reclining in drunken slumber against a wine-jar. He also appears as one of the Eight Immortals of the Wine-cup (a subject which, like the Eight Taoist Immortals, is specially suited for octagonal bowls and vessels) or floating down a river in a log boat, book in hand and apparently regardless of danger, or again, like Chou Mao-shu, contemplating his favourite lotus flowers. Another poet who figures with his special flower is T'ao Yüan-ming, the lover of the chrysanthemum. Again, the State examinations made literary success the key to official preferment, and direct or indirect allusions to this circumstance can be found in many of the porcelain designs. The literary aspirant is seen standing on a dragon's head, implying that he is head of the list, and waving a branch of cassia, emblem of literary success, or dreaming of future honours, the dream issuing in a mist from his head. Other designs symbolical of literary success are described elsewhere in connection with the gods of literature.

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[1] See p. 131.

[2] This is the usual explanation given of the scene in which a young horseman is depicted meeting a beautiful lady in a chariot.

Poetry and romance provide many themes for the decorator. Sometimes the stories are told in a succession of scenes running round a vase or bowl, obviously tales of love and intrigue, though we can rarely give them a name. One such picture shows a lover scaling the garden wall to find his mistress, having thrown his boots over first; another shows a man spying from behind a screen on a pair of love-makers. It matters little if our curiosity remains unsatisfied as to the names of the actors in these scenes which are not peculiar to the Chinese. What matters is that the figures and their surroundings make admirable decoration. The Chinese costumes are highly picturesque—perhaps they appear particularly so to Western eyes from their unfamiliarity—and of all the figure designs which appear in ceramic decoration, there is none so charming as the graceful Chinese lady. The single figures standing by a vase of flowers, which occur so frequently on the export blue and white, doubtless became a trifle hackneyed, and when perfunctorily drawn they deserved the uncomplimentary name of "long Elizas," given them by the Dutch; but it would be a gratuitous insult to apply this term to the real *mei jên* (beautiful beings) of the Chinese which adorn some of the best of the vases and dishes of the K'ang Hsi period. On these we see ladies engaged in domestic pursuits, or in scenes illustrating the Elegant Accomplishments of writing, drawing, music and checkers; with children in the garden or the courtyard; in bevies in the Imperial pleasure grounds; gathering lotus on the lake at the annual Lotus Festival; or looking at the flowers in the garden by candle light.

Children, too, are rendered with a sympathetic touch in Chinese decoration, playing with animals and birds, enjoying games with kites and hobby-horses, disporting themselves in mock processions such as they have seen at the Dragon Boat Festival, dressed up as warriors and wearing ferocious monster masks, or even parodying the more staid occupations of their elders.

Like ourselves, the Chinese are brought up on a host of stories, some historical and some legendary, some with a moral and some without; and these are well represented on the porcelain. The Twenty-four Paragons of Filial Piety[1] and the Virtuous Heroines, separately supply quite a substantial number of designs; but occasionally we see a whole set extravagantly used up on a single piece, such as a large blue-and-white jar conveniently moulded with rows of petal-shaped compartments to receive them. Of the pure legends one of the best known is the story of Wang Chih, watching the spirits of the Pole Star playing checkers in a mountain retreat. One of them gave him a thing like a peach-stone to put in his mouth and he watched the game so long that, when he was bidden at last to go home, the wooden handle of his axe had mouldered into dust, and returning to his native village he found that his family and friends had long since perished. The game of checkers, *wei ch'i,* is one of the "elegant accomplishments" of the Chinese; and absorption in it is so commendable that they make a hero of the general, Hsieh An, who refused to allow the news of an important victory to disturb his game.

But undoubtedly the largest stock of decorative motives is supplied by the religious and philosophic cults of China. The subject of Chinese religions is a complicated one, chiefly because the Chinese have always been a tolerant people. Provided a religion did not interfere with politics, it was permitted to run its course in China, and religious persecutions are rarer in Chinese history than perhaps in any other. It is true that Christianity was banned at one period of the 19th century, but that was because the Roman Catholic Church was mistaken for a secret society. The nearest approach to a State religion in China is Confucianism, which is, however, more of a philosophic doctrine than a religion, though it inculcates the very definitely religious observances of ancestor worship. Buddhism has had from time to time fervent supporters and fervent enemies among the ruling houses, and it has always had a very large following among the people. Taoism, which started as a pure and lofty religion, was submerged at an early date by a host of superstitions chiefly concerned with the cult of longevity; but as it appeals to the superstitious natures of the people it has retained its hold on the Chinese. Generally speaking, Confucianism is the cult of the ruling caste and the educated Chinese, Buddhism and Taoism those of the mass of the people, and it should not be forgotten that Mohammedanism claims several millions of followers. But behind all these more or less definite cults there is a host of extravagant and childish superstitions, relics of a Nature worship which preceded all the formulated doctrines. The ignorant masses live surrounded by invisible powers, benignant spirits which must be courted and malignant demons which must be propitiated or repelled. They are in consequence the prey to every sort of charlatan, geomantist, exorcist, and dealer in magic and spells. All these beliefs and superstitions are naturally reflected in the art of the country, and much of the porcelain decoration can only be interpreted in the light of religion and folklore.

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[1] For their individual stories see Mayers, *Chinese Readers' Manual;* and Wisdom of the East Series, *Book of Filial Duty.*

The teaching of Confucius with its high moral maxims and its neglect of the supernatural does not provide many themes for the artist. The great teacher himself is occasionally portrayed alone, as a seated, bearded figure in official robes and with a tasselled hat, or in company with Buddha and Laotse, the founder of the Taoist cult. Ancestor worship is responsible for the canonization of great men, such as Kuan Yü, a famous Han warrior who was eventually deified as god of war in 1594 under the name of Kuan Ti. He is a familiar figure in late Chinese porcelain, as a dignified personage with flowing beard, seated in full armour with his hand raised in a gesture of command, or on horseback attended by his squire, Chou Ts'ang, who carries a halberd, and his son, Kuan P'ing, or again with a book in his hand to show his regard for the pen as well as for the sword.

The followers of Confucius would naturally include devotees of the gods of literature, the special property of the ruling classes. Chief of these is Wên Ch'ang, the star-god of literature, who resides in the constellation of the Great Bear. He appears as a bearded dignitary in mandarin dress, seated with folded hands or standing with a *ju-i* sceptre in hand and a wreath or jewelled band in his head-dress. A more popular figure is the demon-faced K'uei Hsing, who stands on the head of a fish-dragon holding a scroll or cake of ink in his left hand and brandishing a pencil-brush in his right (Plate 54, Fig. 1). A scholar who, in spite of his success in the State examinations, was refused office because of his unprepossessing appearance, he had thrown himself in despair into the Yangtse, but was miraculously rescued by a fish-dragon which carried him up to Heaven. The fish and the dragon are concerned in another familiar story which has to do with literary success. The salmon, or sturgeon, are said to attempt every year to leap up the falls of Lung-mên (the Dragon Gate), and any fish which succeeds in this feat is changed into a dragon. The story is taken as an allegory of the aspiring candidate for literary honours and forms an appropriate design for porcelain made for the use of the literati.

Buddhism supplies many subjects both for the figure modeller and the porcelain decorator. Buddha himself is seen in many of his manifestations, standing on the lotus, seated in the teaching attitude, reclining in Nirvana, with the other members of the Buddhist Trinity, Manjusri and Samantabhadra, or in a purely Chinese group which represents his meeting with Confucius and Laotse. Manjusri is also represented riding on a lion and Samantabhadra on an elephant.

Of the Bodhisattva, the most familiar figure is Kuan-yin, whose image must have existed in almost every house in China. There are several versions of this graceful figure and more than one explanation of its personality. One represents the Kuan-yin as a draped and hooded female figure enthroned, with her attributes—a dove and vase of nectar—beside her and two smaller attendant figures, Lung Nü (the dragon-maid) holding a pearl, and Chên Tsai, the comrade of her earthly adventures. This Kuan-yin is reputed to have been the daughter of a legendary king, Miao-chuang. According to the more orthodox story Kuan-yin is a Chinese version of the Buddhist Avalokitesvara, and as such she sometimes is shown according to the Indian tradition with eleven heads and many hands. But her most popular and pleasing manifestations are as Kuan-yin the Maternal, to whom childless women pray, and as the Goddess of Mercy. As the latter she stands on a cloud-base with robes flowing in the wind or is seated in contemplation on a rocky pedestal, a singularly gracious and beautiful figure. As the former she appears Madonna-like with a child in her arms, and it is said that the Japanese converts to Christianity in the 16th century actually adopted her as a Madonna and that the Jesuits in China made good use of the resemblance in their propaganda.

There are other figures of similar import which are apt to be confused with Kuan-yin. Hariti, the Japanese Kichimojin, once a devourer of infants and afterwards converted by Buddha into their protector, is represented as a female holding a peach and nursing an infant whose hands are folded in prayer. Another is the " Goddess of Childbirth," a seated lady with jewelled head-dress holding an infant with a *ling chih* fungus in its hand.

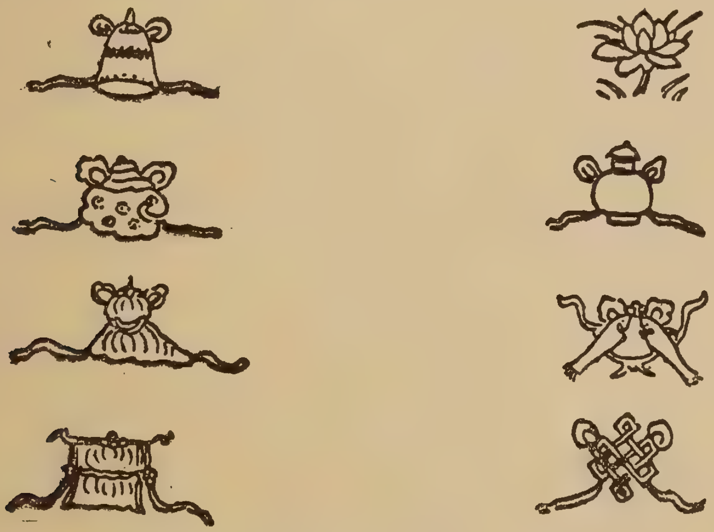
The Arhats or Lohan, apostles of Buddha, are represented in groups or singly. Originally sixteen, their number was increased to eighteen in China by the addition of Pu-tai Ho-shang and Dharmatrata. The latter, a long-haired man who carries a vase and a fly-whisk in his hands and a bundle of books on his back, sits contemplating an image of Buddha. The former is one of the most popular Buddhist figures, the jolly monk with the hempen bag which contains all the " precious things." He is represented as a laughing fat man, half nude, often surrounded by playful children. In Japan he is worshipped under the name of Hotei as the god of contentment, and in China he is regarded as Mi-lo Fo, the Maitreya or coming Buddha.

Tamo, the Indian Bodhidharma, is another not uncommon figure in porcelain. The first Chinese patriarch, he is said to have come to Lo-yang in the beginning of the 6th century and to have remained in contemplation (" the wall-gazing Brahmin ") for nine years. After his death the legend is that he returned to India wrapped in his shroud and carrying one shoe in his hand, the other being left behind in his tomb. He is generally represented in this guise or as crossing the sea to Japan on a reed.

Apart from these and other personalities, such as the Deva kings who guard the Four Quarters of the Buddhist Heaven and the Judges and Guardians of the Buddhist Hell, there are numerous creatures and emblems which Buddhism has implanted in Chinese art. The Eight Happy Omens (*pa chi hsiang*) which were revealed on the sole of Buddha's foot constantly appear in porcelain decoration, viz. *lun*, the wheel or chakra, sometimes replaced by the bell (*chung*) ; *lo*, the conch shell, an emblem of victory ; *san*, the State umbrella ; *kai*, the canopy ; *hua*, the (lotus) flower ; *p'ing*, the vase ; *yü*, the pair of fishes, also an emblem of fertility and conjugal happiness ; and *ch'ang*, the angular knot, representing the entrails, an emblem of longevity. To these may be added the crossed dorjes or thunderbolts of Vajrapani, the leaf-shaped halo of flames which is often used as an ornamental design, sacred Sanskrit characters such as the formula *om mane padme hum*, and formal lotus designs.

Among the animals associated with Buddhism are the elephant who carries the vase of sacred jewels, the white horse (*pai ma*) who brought the scriptures from India, the hare who offered himself as food to Buddha, and the Chinese lion, who, as the dog of Fo (Buddha), acts as guardian to the Buddhist temples or as a joss-stick holder on Buddhist altars.

All these creatures are represented in ceramic sculpture and decoration, especially the lions, which are generally modelled in pairs—the female with a cub and the male with a ball of brocade—or painted singly and in groups playing with balls of brocade and holding the silken streamers in their jaws. To the Western eye the lion as represented in Chinese art is an absurd, grotesque creature. But he was not always so. In the earlier periods he bears a decided resemblance to the king of beasts, although the Chinese artists cannot have had many opportunities of studying him in the flesh: but, even so, on a famous picture screen of the 5th century[1] he wears the badge of submission in the bell which hangs round his neck and he has already developed a tendency to playfulness.[2] In Buddhist art the king of beasts has surrendered, like Una's lion, to the law of gentleness and allows himself to be led as the symbol of Buddha's influence over the wild tribes of Asia. As time went on his docility and playfulness were exaggerated, and he became both in disposition and features more like a puppy than a lion. He is, in fact, scarcely distinguishable from the *shih tzŭ k‘ou* or lion dog, the Pekinese spaniel. The ball of brocade with



The Eight Buddhist Emblems (*pa chi hsiang*).

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[1] By Lu T‘an-wei. See J. C. Ferguson, *Outlines of Chinese Art*, Chicago, 1918, p. 215.

[2] According to an appreciation of the picture by the Sung Emperor Shên Tsung the lion "is pleased with the appearance of his tail. Though fierce, yet he is gentle. Such playfulness hung in the Main Hall has the effect of adding a guest to the festive board."

its streamers with which he plays, was perhaps originally the Buddhist jewel[1] of the Law, the stone which grants every wish; and the tubes which are often fitted at the back or on the base of the porcelain lions were intended to hold sticks of incense for burning on the domestic altar.

But if Buddhistic subjects are fairly numerous in Chinese decorative art, the motives inspired by Taoism are legion. The original teachings of Laotse, which urged abstraction from worldly cares as leading to the highest good, have no more to do with the Taoism of applied art than the teachings of Epicurus had to do with the cult of pleasure for which his later followers were proverbial. The Taoism of porcelain decoration is almost entirely concerned with the cult of longevity and the quest of the elixir of life which became the chief preoccupations of the later Taoists. Laotse becomes indistinguishable from Shou Lao, the god of longevity, who is represented as a venerable man with bald, protuberant forehead, riding on an ox or seated on a rocky platform in the Shou Shan (Hills of Longevity), holding a knotted staff in one hand with rolls of writing attached and a peach in the other and accompanied by his familiars, the white crane, the spotted deer and the tortoise. Mt. P'êng Lai and the other "hills of longevity" are in the Taoist Paradise, situated in the Blessed Islands somewhere in the Eastern sea. Glimpses of them are given in porcelain designs—the *t'ien t'ang* or heavenly pavilion appearing in the mist, Taoist saints and immortals crossing the waves by various supernatural conveyances on their way to the islands, the mountain landscapes themselves with the peculiar Taoist flora, the pine, bamboo, prunus, peach and *ling chih* fungus, all capable of prolonging life, and among these surroundings the many Taoist genii paying court to the God of Long Life. In the throng are the Eight Immortals, the Twin Genii, Hou Hsien Shêng, Hsi Wang Mu and her attendant fairies, Tung-fang So and others.

The Eight Immortals (*pa hsien*), so familiar in ceramic designs, are but a few of the many hundreds of *hsien* or beings who have attained by various means to immortality. Their names are:

(1) Chung-li Ch'üan, or Han Chung-li, a fat man with bare abdomen, who holds a *ling chih* fungus and a fly-whisk or fan.
(2) Lü Tung-pin, armed with a sword with which he slays evil spirits.
(3) Li T'ieh-kuai, Li with the iron crutch, a lame beggar with crutch and pilgrim's gourd from which issue clouds and apparitions.

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[1] The character *ch'iu* (ball) has the same sound as *ch'iu* (jewel).

(4) Ts'ao Kuo-chiu with winged hat and official robes and carrying a pair of castanets.
(5) Lan Ts'ai-ho, of uncertain sex, carrying a hoe and a basket of flowers.[1]
(6) Chang Kuo Lao, with the magic mule, of which he keeps a picture folded up in his wallet. By spurting water on this he makes the beast materialise when required. His attributes are a fish-drum and a pair of rods.
(7) Han Hsiang Tzŭ, a young man with a flute.
(8) Ho Hsien Ku, a maiden who wears a cloak of mug-wort leaves and carries a lotus or a ladle.

The Twin Genii of Union and Harmony (*ho ho êrh hsien*) are a pair of ragged mendicants with smiling boyish faces, one of whom often carries a broom and the other a box containing blessings. They are frequently confused in Chinese art with the semi-Buddhist pair, Shih-tê, who also carries a broom, and his companion Han-shan, the Japanese Jittoku and Kanzan. Hou Hsien Shêng (the Japanese Gama Sennin) is a wild-looking person whose familiar is a three-legged toad. He carries a string of " cash " in his hand, and is not distinguishable from Liu Hai, the denizen of the moon.

Hsi Wang Mu is the Queen-Mother of the West, whose home is in the K'un-lun mountains. Here the peach of longevity grows and here she received the Chou Emperor Mu Wang, who was brought thither by his famous Eight Horses. Another of the genii, Tung-fang So, obtained his immortality by stealing one of her peaches (Plate 40, Fig. 2). Hsi Wang Mu (Plate 66, Fig. 2) recalls Greek mythology by some of her attributes, the phœnix which resembles the peacock of Hera and her messengers, the blue-winged birds which suggest the doves of Aphrodite. She is usually accompanied by fair female attendants, one of whom carries a basket of peaches.

Very like the attendant of Hsi Wang Mu is the Flower Fairy (*Hua hsien*), who carries a basket of flowers ; and one could name many other supernatural beings of Taoist lore who figure occasionally in porcelain designs, such as the San Kuan, the three Ministers of Heaven, Earth, and Water, who are represented as seated figures in ceremonial attire each holding a tablet before his breast; Wang Tzŭ-ch'iao, who rides on a crane, playing a flute; Ma Shih-huang, riding on a dragon; the hermit Huang An, whose steed is a tortoise; and Chang Chiu-ko, who transforms pieces cut from his garments into butterflies.

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[1] Not to be confused with Ma Ku, sister of the Soothsayer Wang Fang-p'ing and herself a Taoist celebrity. She is represented as a graceful female figure carrying a hoe and a basket of flowers and accompanied by a lion.

The creatures specially associated with Taoism are the Eight Horses of Mu Wang, the spotted deer, crane and tortoise, and the toad and hare that pound the elixir of long life in the moon. There are numerous plants and trees which have the virtue of prolonging life, such as the cypress, and the pine of which the resin has great virtues: the white cranes are said to be the spirits of ancient pines, and pine-seeds promote longevity. The bamboo, prunus, pear, jujube, gourd and peach: the *ling chih* fungus and ginseng roots: the sweet flag and the chrysanthemum are all emblems of longevity. There are besides emblems such as the attributes of the Eight Immortals, the Swastika (*wan*), and the *Ju-i* sceptre which grants every wish. This last is often carried by divinities and *hsien*, and given to mortals as a birthday emblem and to brides. The head of the *Ju-i* sceptre, which is not unlike that of the *ling chih*, appears in ornamental borders and in conventional cloud forms carrying with it everywhere a note of good omen. We may add here the well-known border pattern of crested waves punctuated by conical rocks—the "rock of ages" pattern—which has reference to the sea-girt islands of the Taoist Paradise.

Interwoven with the various religious motives already described are others which are explained as survivals of the many forms of primitive Nature worship. They are concerned with the sun, moon, stars, the sea and air, storms and pestilence, and the powers of light and darkness. The Sun is a disc in which is a three-legged bird, and it is probable that the pearl or disc which is for ever being pursued by cloud-bringing dragons was originally the orb of the sun. There is a Goddess of the Moon who is sometimes distinguished by a butterfly on her robes and a mirror in her right hand, sometimes as a beautiful lady holding a branch of peach or cherry and with the moon-disc beside her on which the moon-hare is at work with pestle and mortar. Liu Hai with his toad is another denizen of the moon and there is a cassia tree growing there which is an emblem of literary success.[1] The signs of the Zodiac are represented by animals and the four quarters of the heaven have their emblems, viz. the azure dragon for the East, the white tiger for the West, the black tortoise for the North, and the red sun-bird for the South. There are numerous Star Gods—the Spirit of the North, the Star Gods of Literature who reside in the Great Bear and the Three Star Gods of Longevity, Rank and Happiness (Shou Hsing, Lu Hsing and Fu Hsing). The last three occur frequently in decoration: the first in the guise of Shou Lao (see p. 128), the second in mandarin dress holding a *Ju-i* sceptre, and the third similarly clad and carrying a child on one arm who reaches out for a peach held in the other hand (Plate 13). The constellations themselves are depicted by small discs connected by straight lines.

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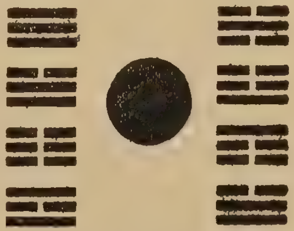
[1] To "pluck the cassia of the moon" is to win a high place in the State examinations.

One of the star legends appropriated by the porcelain decorators is that of the Weaving Maiden (Chih Nü) and the Oxherd (Ch'ien Niu), two lovers who are separated all the year save for one night when the " magpies fill up the Milky Way and enable the Spinning Maiden to cross " (Plate 68, Fig. 2). The legend of Chang Ch'ien who explored the Milky Way and brought back the Weaving Maiden's shuttle has already been mentioned. He is depicted floating down the Yellow River on a log boat with this trophy in his hand.[1]

Among the powers of the air are: Fêng Po (Lord of the Winds), a bearded man with winged hat, holding two flags like a signaller; Yü Shih (Master of Rain), a bearded man with a sword in his right and a wine-cup in his left hand; Lei kung (Duke of Thunder), a winged demon with one foot on a flaming wheel, a dagger and an axe in his hands; and Tien mu (Mother of Lightning) a lady with a mirror in each hand.

The demon-face of the *t'ao t'ieh* ogre is borrowed from ancient bronzes; and demons appear in corporate forms in certain scenes. They are usually being faithfully dealt with by some champion like Chung K'uei, a fierce bearded man armed with a sword, or the Immortal Lü Tung-pin; and there is the combat of the demons of the air and water which occasionally appears on porcelain. The battle takes place in front of the Golden Island temple in the Yangtse and is watched by interested spectators who are apparently mortal and Chinese.

The *yin yang* and *pa kua* are relics of doctrines far older than any of the established religions. The former, a circle bisected by a wavy line, is an attempt to symbolise the duality of nature, the elements of male (*yang*) and female (*yin*), of light and darkness, heat and cold, and so on. The *pa kua*, eight trigrams, or combinations of three lines variously divided, hark back to the legendary Emperor Fu Hsi to whom these mystic signs were revealed on the back of a dragon horse (*lung ma*) which



The *yin yang* between the *pa kua*.

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[1] See P. Yetts, *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, 1922–23.

rose from the Yellow River. From these he worked out a system which explained all the phenomena of Nature.

The subject of Nature-worship and the mention of the mythical *lung ma* reminds us that the most important of all animals in Chinese art has yet to be considered. The dragon in one form or another is a constant feature of Chinese decoration. Whether derived from one of the saurians whose eggs were recently found in Mongolia, or from the crocodile and from the imagination, the dragon was important as the bringer of clouds and fertilising rain. In early Chinese art he has a smooth lizard-like form with divided tail. This is the *ch'ih lung* or *mang*, the archaic dragon of ancient bronzes and jades (Plate 33, Fig. 2). In this form he has survived on porcelain, but generally in archaistic designs. The typical dragon with horned head, bearded and scowling, scaly serpentine body and four feet armed with claws is reputed to have been made popular by the artist Chang Sêng-yu in the 6th century. He is the emblem of the Emperor, and, indeed, the word dragon is almost synonymous with Imperial. During the last two dynasties the five-clawed dragon has been regarded as the Imperial insignia. In porcelain decoration dragons most usually are shown emerging from the sea or from clouds, surrounded by flame scrolls and in pursuit of a "pearl" which is variously explained as the Buddhist jewel or the sun-disc.

The emblem of the Empress is the phœnix, a mythical bird with head of a pheasant, beak of a swallow, long neck and flowing tail of an argus pheasant or a peacock, and long claws. It has a dual nature as implied by its name *fêng-huang*, of which *fêng* signifies the male and *huang* the female element. Like the dragon it has an archaic prototype in the *k'uei fêng* of ancient bronzes; and there is another mythical bird, the *luan*, which closely resembles it.

Another creature of dual nature is the *ch'i lin* (*ch'i* being the male and *lin* the female), which has the body and legs of a deer, the head of a dragon, curled and bushy tail, and flame-like attributes on the shoulders. It is a creature of benignant import, whose appearance foreshadows the coming of a virtuous ruler. Its name, which has been anglicised as kylin, is constantly misapplied to the Buddhist lion, to which it has scarcely a superficial resemblance. Other mythical monsters are the *hai shou* or sea-monsters which might be mistaken for kylins, and the *pi hsieh* which resembles the lion. The Chinese lion (Plate 10) itself has already been discussed (p. 127).

The tiger (*hu*) is the king of the Chinese animal world and bears the character *wang* (prince) on his forehead. He is more familiar to the Chinese than the lion, and is represented in a more naturalistic shape, often associated with the bamboos which doubtless formed his wonted cover. He is lord of the western quarter of the universe, and in ancient Chinese lore he was regarded as a protector against evil spirits. The elephant (*hsiang*) we have seen to be one of the animals sacred to Buddha, but he also appears in Chinese art as the symbol of Peace. The spotted deer (*lu*) is one of the familiars of the god of longevity, and deer in general are a motive which suggests the auspicious word *lu* (preferment). A celebrated picture known as the Hundred Deer has been utilised by the porcelain decorator. The horse (*ma*) is associated with the stories of the *lung ma* (see p. 131), the *pai ma* or white horse which carried the Buddhist sutra to China, and the Eight Horses of Mu Wang. There are also sea-horses which are depicted galloping over conventional waves in one familiar porcelain design (Plate 43, Fig. 3); and the horse occurs in a curious design, ridden by a monkey which is being pursued by a bee. The monkey is perhaps one of the motives with a literary significance, as its name *hou* has a homophone which means to "expect office." Rams (*yang*) are a symbol of Spring and the design of three rams suggests the return of Spring (Plate 26, Fig. 2). The tortoise is one of the many emblems of long life, and the squirrel appears in a familiar design climbing on a grape vine (Plate 49, Fig. 2).

The fish (*yü*) has a name which sounds like *yü* (fertility), and a pair of fishes is not only one of the Buddhist emblems but a symbol of wedded happiness. Fish sporting among water plants has been a familiar design from Ming times onwards, and large fish leaping a waterfall have already been mentioned as emblems of literary success.

Birds are rendered with great skill and charm by the porcelain painters. Some of them have a special significance, like the stork, the familiar of the God of Longevity, a pair of mandarin ducks which symbolise wedded happiness, magpies which suggest a happy meeting, etc. Again they are associated with certain plants and trees, storks or egrets with the lotus, sparrows or finches with the prunus, partridges or quails with millet, swallows with the willow, and the cock, the bird of fame, with the peony, the flower of riches and honours. Other bird designs are taken from well-known pictures, such as the Hundred Cranes, the Hundred Birds paying court to the Phœnix, wild geese in marshy landscapes and a pair of pheasants on a rock beside a flowering peony and magnolia tree.

The bat (*fu*) is not in itself a creature of surpassing beauty, and its frequent occurrence in Chinese ornament is due to the circumstances that its name has the same sound as *fu* (happiness). It is therefore a creature of good omen, especially when painted red, the colour of happiness. Five bats (Plate 51, Fig. 3) are used to symbolise the five specially desired forms of happiness—long life, riches, peace, love of virtue, and an end crowning the life.

Insects, too, have their place in Chinese ornament. Grasses and insects and a cicada on a rock are designs which survived from Ming times: the bee and monkey have been mentioned already: and the butterfly (*tieh*) is aptly used in many designs. Its rebus-meaning, "to double," is reason for its frequent occurrence in symbolical designs, as with the chrysanthemum and other flowers which suggest longevity, and its bright colours and dainty form lend themselves naturally to porcelain decoration. It occurs in brocade patterns of butterflies and flowers in a ground of dotted green, or in medallions (Plate 58, Fig. 2), or in the crowded design of the Hundred Butterflies.

China is the Flowery Land and nowhere are flowers more appreciated or the value of floral decoration better understood. There is hardly a decorated piece of porcelain which has not a floral motive somewhere. It may be only a conventional floral scroll in the border, or a band of leaves, but in most cases flowers or trees play a prominent part in the design. The drawing of flowers and plants is as a rule naturalistic, but it is never of the copy-book order. The plants are growing, they bend gracefully in the breeze and they are full of "life movement." None of their natural beauty of form or colour is lost in the hands of the Chinese decorator, and often on the superior Yung Chêng and Ch'ien Lung porcelains the floral motives are handled with the skill and freedom which could scarcely be surpassed on paper or silk.

It seems pedantic to look for any reason, except the pure beauty of the subject, for the choice of this or that combination of flowers and trees. But Chinese decoration is in a sense pedantic. It nearly always has a symbolic meaning of some kind underlying it, but fortunately the inherent beauty of the floral designs remains unaffected by any academic arrangement of the details. What could be more charming than the four groups of season flowers, the tree peony for Spring, the lotus for Summer, the chrysanthemum for Autumn, and the prunus for Winter? The combination of pine, bamboo, and prunus is effective enough in itself, but it also suggests three friends who keep their smiles even in Winter, and further the Three Friends—Confucius, Buddha, and Laotse. There are special flowers assigned to each of the twelve months, and there is a design known as the Hundred Flowers which makes a vase appear like one great bouquet. There are numerous plants and trees which are supposed to possess the power to prolong life—the pine, bamboo, peach, prunus, willow, chrysanthemum, *ling chih* fungus, gourd, etc. The combination of the three fruits—peach, pomegranate and finger citron—symbolise the Three Abundances of Years, Sons, and Happiness; and the orange is regarded as a symbol of good luck.

Landscape is another *forte* of the Chinese painter, and the porcelain decorators made full use of its ornamental possibilities. *Shan shui* (mountains and rivers), the Chinese phrase for landscape, accurately describes most of the landscapes depicted on porcelain. Wild mountain scenes with waterfalls and streams, or the more sophisticated beauty spots such as the lake at Hangchow with its pavilions and bridges[1] or the Imperial pleasure grounds at Peking provide numerous themes. Sometimes the landscapes are peopled with figures—brigands and warriors in combat, sages enjoying the scenery, travellers arriving at a house in the hills, rustics at work, fishermen on the rivers, and so on. In a few cases definite scenes of agriculture—rice growing, silk culture, etc.—are taken from manuals illustrating these industries; but more often the landscapes are simply derived from well-known pictures. The four seasons are represented by appropriate landscapes, with blossoming fruit trees for Spring, snow storm for Winter, etc.

Painting and calligraphy go hand in hand in China, and a few boldly written characters, stanzas of verse and even long inscriptions play a part in porcelain decoration. They are generally aphorisms or quotations from literature, but they sometimes have a direct reference to the painted designs which complete the decoration. Other inscriptions are of a religious nature, and these are sometimes in the sacred Sanskrit characters or in Arabic if written for the benefit of Mohammedans.

Frequent allusions have been made to the symbolic meaning which underlies so much of the porcelain decorations. Much of this is expressed in rebus fashion and can only be interpreted by reference to Chinese characters. A language with many characters and few sounds is necessarily full of homophones and apt to breed puns and plays upon words. One simple instance will be enough to show how the Chinese decorator made use of this feature of his language. A vase is covered with a design of red (*hung*) bats (*fu*) flying among cloud scrolls. This can be interpreted as the phrase *hung fu chi t'ien* which means " great (*hung*) happiness (*fu*) reaching to heaven." It is easy to see how all sorts of good wishes for riches, honours, literary success, long life, fertility, happiness, etc., can be embodied by such means in the decoration of a bowl or vase. Instances could be multiplied, but it would require a dictionary of " phrase and fable " to exhaust the subject and half a dozen additional examples would be of little use.

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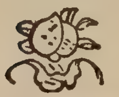
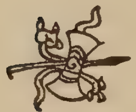
[1] The much-discussed willow pattern of English pottery and porcelain is derived from one of these famous lake landscapes, and the poetical story which has been attached to it by certain imaginative writers is purely an afterthought.

But apart from this obscure symbolism, there is a host of direct symbols and devices which are prominent in Chinese decoration and at the same time very intriguing to the uninitiated. They usually belong to certain well-known categories such as the Eight Musical Instruments, the Twelve Embroidery Ornaments, the Eight Buddhist Emblems, the Seven Paraphernalia of the Universal Sovereign, the Attributes of the Eight Immortals, and the Eight Precious Things. Besides these there is a comprehensive group of vases, implements, and symbols known as the Hundred Antiques (*po ku*) which occur frequently in panel decoration; and there are a few miscellaneous emblems such as the *yin yang* and *pa kua* (see p. 131), the Swastika, the Emblems of the Four Accomplishments (viz. a lute, a checkers board, a pair of books and a picture scroll), a pair of peaches (for longevity) and a combination of pencil-brush (*pi*), cake of ink (*ting*), and a *ju-i* sceptre which together form the rebus *pi ting ju-i* (" may things be arranged as your wish ").



Double peach and bat.



Pi ting ju-i.

The Eight Musical Instruments (*pa yin*) comprise the sounding stone (*ch'ing*), bell, lute, flute, box with hammer inside, drum, reed organ and ocarina.

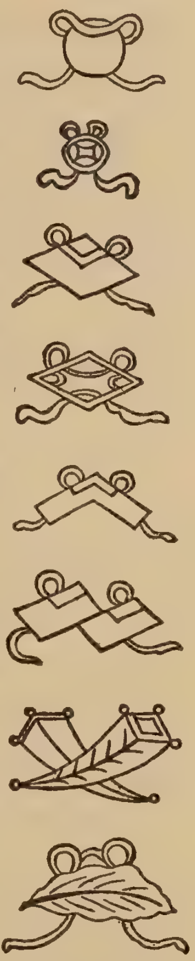
The Twelve Embroidery Ornaments (*shih êrh chang*) are the sun-disc, moon, a constellation, mountains, dragons, pheasant, two temple vessels (one ornamented with a tiger, and the other with a monkey), aquatic grass, fire, grains of rice, an axe, and a symbol (*fu*) resembling an axe.

The Eight Buddhist Emblems (*pa chi hsiang*), which appeared on the sole of Buddha's foot have been already mentioned on p. 126.

The Seven Gems (*ch'i pao*), or Paraphernalia of the Universal Sovereign, are the golden wheel, the jade-like girl, the horse, the elephant, the divine guardian of the treasury, the general in command of the army and the jewels (a bundle of jewelled wands) which fulfil every wish.

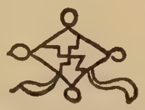
The Attributes of the Eight Immortals (*pa an hsien*) are the fan of Chung-li, the sword of Lü Tung-pin, the gourd of Li T'ieh-kuai, the castanets of Ts'ao Kuo-chiu, the basket of flowers of Lan Ts'ai-ho, the fish-drum of Chang Kuo, the flute of Han Hsiang, and the lotus of Ho Hsien Ku.

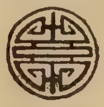
The Eight Precious Things (*pa pao*) are the pearl (*chu*) which grants every wish, the cash (*ch'ien*) which symbolises wealth, the lozenge or picture (*hua*), the open-lozenge (*fang shêng*), the musical stone (*ch'ing*), the pair of books (*chu*), the pair of horn-cups (*chüeh*), and the artemisia leaf (*ai yeh*), a preventative of disease.

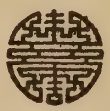

The *pa pao* symbols.

It will be observed that there is a certain amount of overlapping in these categories; and there are a few of the symbols like the pearl, the cash, the sounding-stone—a lucky emblem because its name *ch'ing* sounds like *ch'ing* (good luck)—which are of more common occurrence than the others. The symbols are usually invested with ribbons or fillets, and they sometimes are placed at the bottom of a vessel in lieu of a mark.

The Swastika (*wan*), a much-discussed and world-wide symbol of familiar four-legged form, is regarded as a symbol of longevity. It is actually used for the character *wan* (ten thousand), and intertwined with the circular seal-form of the character *shou* (longevity) it makes the *wan shou* emblem (ten thousand longevities!).


Swastika symbol.


Shou.


Wan shou.

It remains to say a word about the subsidiary patterns which are indispensable for the completion of a well-balanced porcelain design. These include numerous diaper patterns mostly derived from textiles and brocades, and a certain number of well-tried border designs which will be found admirably suited to the parts they are called upon to play. The commonest diaper patterns, used for filling spaces, are matting, lozenge, trellis, and hexagon patterns, and the key-fret. The meander or key-fret (the cloud and thunder pattern) is borrowed from ancient bronzes, and it is often complicated by the introduction of swastika forms. Stiff plantain leaves, another pattern borrowed from bronzes, are appropriate for the necks and the lower parts of vases: and narrow borders and dividing bands are usually composed of fret patterns, silk-worm scrolls, running foliage scrolls, or hatched zigzag or chevron pattern. Strips of brocade design, usually interrupted by symmetrical panels of landscape or flowering plants, are suitable for the shoulders of vases; and a common design for the lower border of vase or bowl is the " rock of ages " pattern (see p. 130) in which stiff conical rocks rise abruptly from the conventional crested waves. Water is commonly represented by a diaper of spiral coils or imbrications, on the surface of which plum blossoms and various symbols are seen floating. The head of the *ju-i* staff (see p. 149) is freely utilised in secondary ornament. Narrow bands of *ju-i* heads are a propitious border pattern, and large pendants or lambrequins usually take the *ju-i* head shape. Cloud-scrolls are another essentially Chinese decoration, used to suggest the sky and air; and these often include a *ju-i* head shape, in which case they are known as *ju-i* cloud-scrolls or " propitious clouds."

The pine, bamboo, and plum are worked into a border pattern of which the Japanese also made free use; a border of red bats occurs on some 18th-century porcelains (Plate 63), and the design of a vine and squirrels, which is derived from an old Sung picture, is used on the necks of vases and occasionally on the borders of dishes. The porcelains made for European trade display other varieties of border patterns (see p. 101), but many, if not most, of these are due to European inspiration.

CHAPTER XV

MARKS

The marks on the Ch'ing porcelains are almost invariably to be found on the base of the vessel. Seals and signatures which occasionally appear in the field of decoration are not to be regarded as potters' marks. It is even doubtful if any of them can be read as signatures of the pot-painter. They are almost always the seals of the artist or calligrapher whose work is reproduced.

The marks proper are usually painted, more rarely stamped or incised. They are written both in the ordinary script (*k'ai shu*) and in angular seal characters (*chuan shu*) and they are commonly enclosed in a double ring or in a square frame. The earlier marks are mainly painted in underglaze blue, but in the course of the 18th century it became more and more usual to employ enamel colours and even gilding. The Ch'ien Lung Imperial seal mark is often painted in red in a square panel reserved in a ground of turquoise-green enamel, and some of the finest enamelled wares, such as those painted in the style of Ku Yüeh Hsüan are marked in a thick enamel (usually blue) which stands up in palpable relief. Porcelain with this raised mark is always worthy of attention. The Chinese place it in a class by itself. Chinese marks and inscriptions are read from right to left, if horizontally written: if in vertical columns, from top to bottom, the sequence of the columns being from right to left.

The chief kinds of marks are (1) date marks, (2) hall-marks, (3) potters' names and factory marks, (4) marks of commendation, symbols, etc.

(1) *Date marks.* The date mark is usually in six or four characters containing the *nien hao* (or reign-name) of the reigning Emperor. The six characters run as follows: *ta ch'ing k'ang hsi nien chih* = made (*chih*) in the K'ang Hsi period (*nien*) of the Great Ch'ing (dynasty): in the four-character mark the name of the dynasty (*ta ch'ing*) is omitted. In rare cases, however, the name of the Emperor is omitted instead and we have the elliptical mark *ta ch'ing nien chih.* This occurs on a blue and white bowl in the British Museum which is decorated in late Ming style; and we may reasonably infer that it is a mark used during the first reign of the Ch'ing dynasty, when such a style of decoration would be natural. A variation of the final character, *chih,* is *tsao,* which has the same meaning, "made"; *tso,* which also means made, is sometimes used for *chih* in potters' signatures.

大清康熙年製

We read in the *T'ao lu*[1] that "in the sixteenth year of K'ang Hsi the district magistrate, Chang Ch'i-chung, a man of Yang-ch'êng, forbade the workmen of Ching-tê Chên to inscribe on the porcelain vessels the *nien hao* of the Emperor or the handwriting (*tzŭ chi*) of the holy men, to prevent their being broken and defaced." It is certain that this prohibition soon became a dead letter, but it may account for the frequency with which the double ring destined for the mark is left empty on K'ang Hsi blue and white, and also for the prevalence of alternative marks such as reign-names of Ming Emperors, marks of commendation and symbols.

It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that Chinese reign-names are not always to be taken at their face value. Whether as a compliment to the distinguished potters of the past, as an indication that the style of a classic reign was being copied, or merely from force of habit, the Ch'ing potters made very free use of certain Ming reign-names. Those of Hsüan Tê, Ch'êng Hua and Chia Ching are almost commoner on K'ang Hsi porcelain than that of K'ang Hsi himself; and in return the name of K'ang Hsi is freely used on 19th-century porcelain. The Yung Chêng and Ch'ien Lung marks are also borrowed by modern potters; but the marks of the minor reigns can generally be taken literally, as there was little temptation to copy them. A special department existed at the Imperial factory for writing marks and seals, and we look for superior calligraphy on the Imperial wares. One would expect, too, that the *nien hao* on Imperial porcelain would be truthfully given; and, indeed, this is probably true in the main, but there are specimens with the K'ang Hsi mark which are undistinguishable from others with the mark of Ch'ien Lung. It is likely that even on Imperial wares the whole-hearted imitation of the ware of a previous Emperor included the use of his *nien hao*.

A more precise indication of date is given on the rare specimens which have a *cyclical date* as well as the *nien hao*. In the cyclical system Chinese chronology is divided into cycles of sixty years and each year of the cycle has a two-character name composed of one of the Ten Stems combined with one of the Twelve Branches.[2] A convenient table worked out by Mr. Hetherington[3] will enable the reader to identify easily any cyclical characters he may meet.

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[1] Bk. VIII, fol. 14, quoting from the *I chih*.

[2] For a list of the Stems and Branches and an explanation of the terms see Mayers' *Chinese Readers' Manual*: a list of cyclical dates is also given in the same work.

[3] *The Early Ceramic Wares of China*, p. 145.

"The first horizontal line of characters represents the ten stems. One of these stems will be found in combination with one of the branches (which follow) in every cyclical date mark. If the eye is carried vertically downwards from the stem which has been detected in the inscription

甲 chia	乙 i	丙 ping	丁 ting	戊 mou	己 chi	庚 kêng	辛 hsin	壬 jên	癸 kuei
1 子 tzŭ	2 丑 chʻou	3 寅 yin	4 卯 mao	5 辰 chʻên	6 巳 ssŭ	7 午 wu	8 未 wei	9 申 shên	10 酉 yu
11 戌 hsü	12 亥 hai	13 子	14 丑	15 寅	16 卯	17 辰	18 巳	19 午	20 未
21 申	22 酉	23 戌	24 亥	25 子	26 丑	27 寅	28 卯	29 辰	30 巳
31 午	32 未	33 申	34 酉	35 戌	36 亥	37 子	38 丑	39 寅	40 卯
41 辰	42 巳	43 午	44 未	45 申	46 酉	47 戌	48 亥	49 子	50 丑
51 寅	52 卯	53 辰	54 巳	55 午	56 未	57 申	58 酉	59 戌	60 亥

until it recognises the branch character, the year of the cycle can be read off at once." Unfortunately the cyclical dates occur sometimes without any *nien hao* and we are left in the dark as to the particular cycle with which we have to deal. In such cases we have to fall back on any internal evidence there may be in the inscription or in the porcelain itself for a solution. A classic instance is the mark on an important *famille rose* bowl in the British Museum, which reads *yu hsin chʻou nien chih*=made in the *hsin chʻou* year recurring (*yu*). Taking our table we locate the Stem *hsin* in the eighth square of the top line and running the eye down the column we find the Branch *chʻou* four squares below it. In this way we gather that the *hsin chʻou* year is the 38th of the cycle.

又辛丑年製

The cyclical system is supposed to have begun in the year 2637 B.C.; but in the Chʻing dynasty we are only concerned with the cycles beginning in 1624, 1684, 1744, 1804, and 1864. The *hsin ch'ou* year in the Ch'ing dynasty must be 1661, 1721, 1781, or 1841, but the only reign in which it could have recurred is that of K'ang Hsi[1] and the only year to which the phrase can apply is 1721.

Hall-marks are so-called because they include the word *t'ang* (hall) or an equivalent, such as *chai* (study), *t'ing* (pavilion), *hsien* or *hsüan* (porch, balcony, pavilion), *kuan* (residence), *fang* (room or house) or *chü* (dwelling). The *t'ang ming* or " family hall name " (usually making reference to some signal event in the family history) is inscribed in one of the chief rooms of the house, on graves, on deeds, etc. Moreover, the Chinese artist almost invariably has a studio- or art-name in which the word hall or one of its equivalents commonly occur.

It is clear, then, that the hall-mark is open to a variety of interpretations. It may be the studio-name of the potter, the family hall-name of the person for whom the pot was made, the building for which it was destined as in the case of temples and palace pavilions, the name of the shop for which it was ordered, or that of the workshop in which it was made or decorated. Prof. Pelliot's dictum[2] that, where the word *chih* (made) terminates the mark, it can only mean " made by," would, if accepted, narrow the issue considerably, as it would reduce most of the hall-marks, including many of the supposed Palace hall-marks, to studio-names. It seems presumptuous to question the accuracy of such a scholar as Prof. Pelliot; but when we find that other sinologues do not agree with him, that educated Chinese are of a different opinion, and that the Professor himself is unable to apply his own rule without getting into difficulties,[3] we feel justified in doubting if this rule can be rigidly applied. At any rate I have been assured by a Chinese gentleman that he and his compatriots are prepared to accept the reading " made for " as well as " made by " in the case in point.

Hall-marks are numerous on Ch'ing dynasty porcelains, and especially on those made in the early years of the 19th century. One interesting and much-quoted hall-mark, that of the *Shên tê t'ang*, occurs on a specimen in the Hippisley Collection which has a poem by the Emperor Tao Kuang in the decoration. If the mark is the studio-name of a potter, the *Shên tê t'ang* specimens will not be earlier than the Tao Kuang period (1821–50);

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[1] It was not the custom to include in an Emperor's reign the year in which his predecessor died. The new Emperor officially dates his reign from the first day of the following year. Thus the K'ang Hsi period is put down as beginning in 1662, though the reign actually includes a part of 1661.

[2] *op. cit.*, p. 49.

[3] *op. cit.*, p. 51.

if, on the other hand, it is, as has been suggested, a Palace hall-mark, there is more latitude in dating them. The general style of the *Shên tê t'ang* porcelains, however, is that of the 19th century, although they include some clever imitations of Ming wares.[1]

Potters' names, etc. Potters' names, apart from hall-marks, are rare on porcelain. They would hardly be expected to appear on Imperial wares; and the minute division of labour which we know prevailed in the factories at Ching-tê Chên would be sufficient explanation of their absence on the ordinary wares. When the vessel passed through so many hands it would be invidious to attach any one workman's name to it. There are certain obscure seal marks which are known as shop marks, but as they are generally illegible they do not help us much, even if we are right in regarding them as the seals of individual potters.

A curious mark, resembling the European letter "G," is seen on K'ang Hsi blue and white and enamelled wares of high quality (Plate 43). It seems probable that this is a mark suggested by some European trader, to distinguish the wares made for him.

The names of Chiang Ming-kao and Ch'ên Kuo-chih are found on specimens of biscuit porcelain made in the early part of the 18th century; and potters' names occasionally appear on the white porcelain of Tê-hua. In both these cases the porcelain would be made and finished by one individual. Similarly potters' names are frequent on the earthenware and stoneware made at such places as Yi-hsing and Fatshan.

Marks of Commendation, etc. It is not unusual to find in the place of the more normal mark some character or phrase commending or describing the ware or invoking a blessing on its possessor. Dedicatory inscriptions at greater length are sometimes written or incised in the field of decoration.

Good wishes are expressed by such characters as *shou* (long life), *fu* (happiness), *chi* (good luck), and *ch'ing* (prosperity), or symbolically by a peach or fungus for longevity, a bat for happiness, etc.; commendation by characters such as *yü* (jade), *chên* (a gem), *ch'üan* (complete).

The character *shou* (longevity) is written in a variety of seal forms, many of them quite fantastic in appearance. Occasionally a vase is decorated entirely with the "Hundred Forms of *Shou*." There is a circular form of *shou* which looks like a meander, especially when the swastika (*wan*) is interwoven with it. This is the *wan shou*[2] symbol meaning "ten thousand longevities." A curious mark found on export blue and white of the K'ang Hsi period is a fanciful form of *shou*, generally known as the "spider mark." Symbols and emblems of various kinds are not infrequently used in the place of a mark on K'ang Hsi blue and white. Those which occur most frequently are the *pa pao* (Eight Precious Things)[1] and the *pa chi hsiang* (Eight Buddhist Emblems of Happy Augury)[2]; but we also see the swastika in a lozenge, the embroidery symbol (*fu*), the *ju-i* head, the tripod vessel (*ting*), the *ling chih* fungus, a sprig of prunus, and a plain artemisia leaf without fillets. The lion and sometimes the dragon are painted on the bottom of snuff-bottles and small vases in place of a mark.

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[1] See *Wares of the Ming Dynasty*, p. 223, and *B.M. Guide*, Fig. 154. In discussing the *Shên tê t'ang* mark in the latter book (p. 159) I gave Prof. Pelliot's dictum what seems now a too ready acceptance.

[2] See p. 137.

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[1] See p. 137.

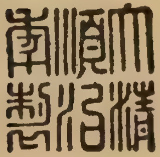
[2] See p. 127.

MARKS

Reign Names.

大清順治年製

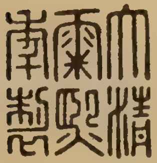
Shun Chih (1644–61).



The same in seal characters.

大清康熙年製

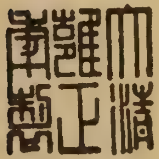
K'ang Hsi (1662–1722).



The same in seal characters.

大清雍正年製

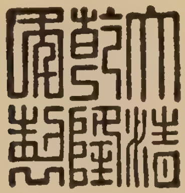
Yung Chêng (1723–35).



The same in seal characters.

大清乾隆年製

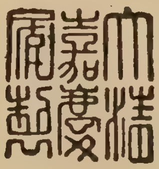
Ch'ien Lung (1736–95).



Ch'ien Lung in seal characters.

嘉慶年製

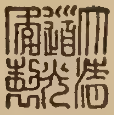
Chia Ch'ing (1796–1820).



The same in seal characters.

大清道光年製

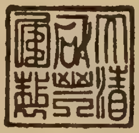
Tao Kuang (1821–50).



The same in seal characters.

大清咸豐年製

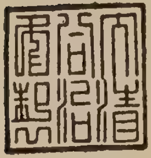
Hsien Fêng (1851–61).



The same in seal characters.

大清同治年製

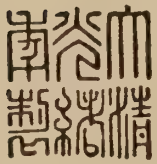
T'ung Chih
(1862–74).



The same in seal
characters.

大清光緒年製

Kuang Hsü
(1875–1908).



The same in seal
characters.

宣統年製

Hsüan T'ung
(1909–12).

洪憲年製

Hung Hsien
(name adopted by Yüan
Shih-k'ai in 1916).

Marks of Ming Emperors frequently
found on Ch'ing porcelain.

大明宣德年製

Hsüan Tê
(1426–35).

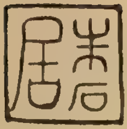
大明成化年製

Ch'êng Hua
(1465–87).

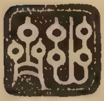
大明嘉靖年製

Chia Ching
(1522–66).

Hall-marks.



Chu shih chü
(red rocks retreat).



Yu chai
(quiet pavilion).

古月軒製

Ku yüeh hsüan chih
(made by Ku Yüeh Hsüan).

菉漪堂

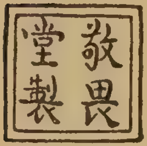
Lu i t'ang
(hall of green ripples).

慎德堂製

Shên tê t'ang chih
(made for the hall of cultivation of virtue).

彩潤堂製

Ts'ai jun t'ang chih
(made in the hall of brilliant colours).

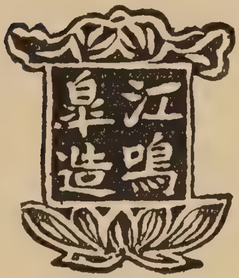


Ching wei t'ang chih
(made for the hall of respectful awe).

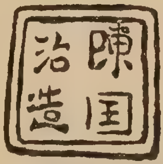
大雅齋

Ta ya chai
(pavilion of grand culture).

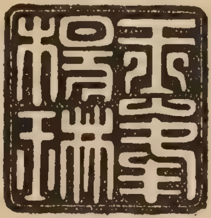
Potters' Names.



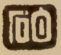
Chiang ming kao tsao
(made by Chiang Ming-kao).



Ch'ên kuo chih tsao
(made by Ch'ên Kuo-chih).

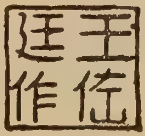


Yü fêng yang lin
(Yang-lin of Yü-fêng).

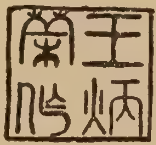


嶺南繪者

Pai-shih (white rock) and Ling nan hui chê (Canton picture).

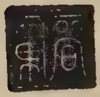


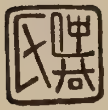
Wang tso t'ing tso
(made by Wang Tso-t'ing).

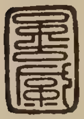


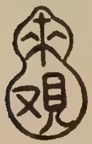
Wang ping jung tso
(made by Wang Ping-jung).

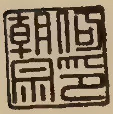
Potters' Names.

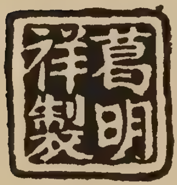

? Chao-chin.

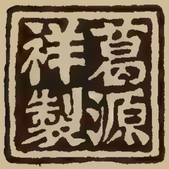

Chung t'un shih
(Chung-t'un family).

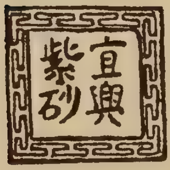

? Li-chih.

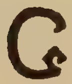

Lai-kuan.

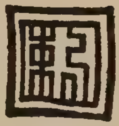

Chao tsung ho yin
(seal of Ho Chao-tsung).

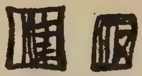

Ko Ming hsiang chih
(made by Ko Ming-hsiang).


Ko yüan hsiang chih
(made by Ko Yüan-hsiang).


Yi hsing tzŭ sha
(brown earth of Yi-hsing).


G mark.

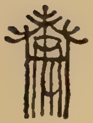
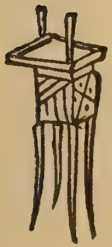
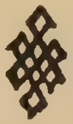
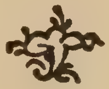
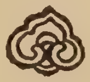
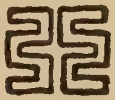

Chih (made to
command).


Shop marks.

Marks of Commendation, etc.

奇玉宝鼎之珍	Ch'i yü pao ting chih chên (a gem among precious vessels of rare jade).
珍玩	Chên wan (precious trinket).
玉	Yü (jade).
雅玩	Ya wan (elegant trinket).
全	Ch'üan (complete).
吉	Chi (good luck).

Marks of Commendation, etc.

福	Fu (happiness).
祿	Lu (rank).
壽	Shou (longevity).
	" Spider " mark (a form of *shou*).
	A tripod.
	Endless knot.
	Ling chih fungus.
	Head of a ju-i sceptre.
	Fu (an embroidery ornament).

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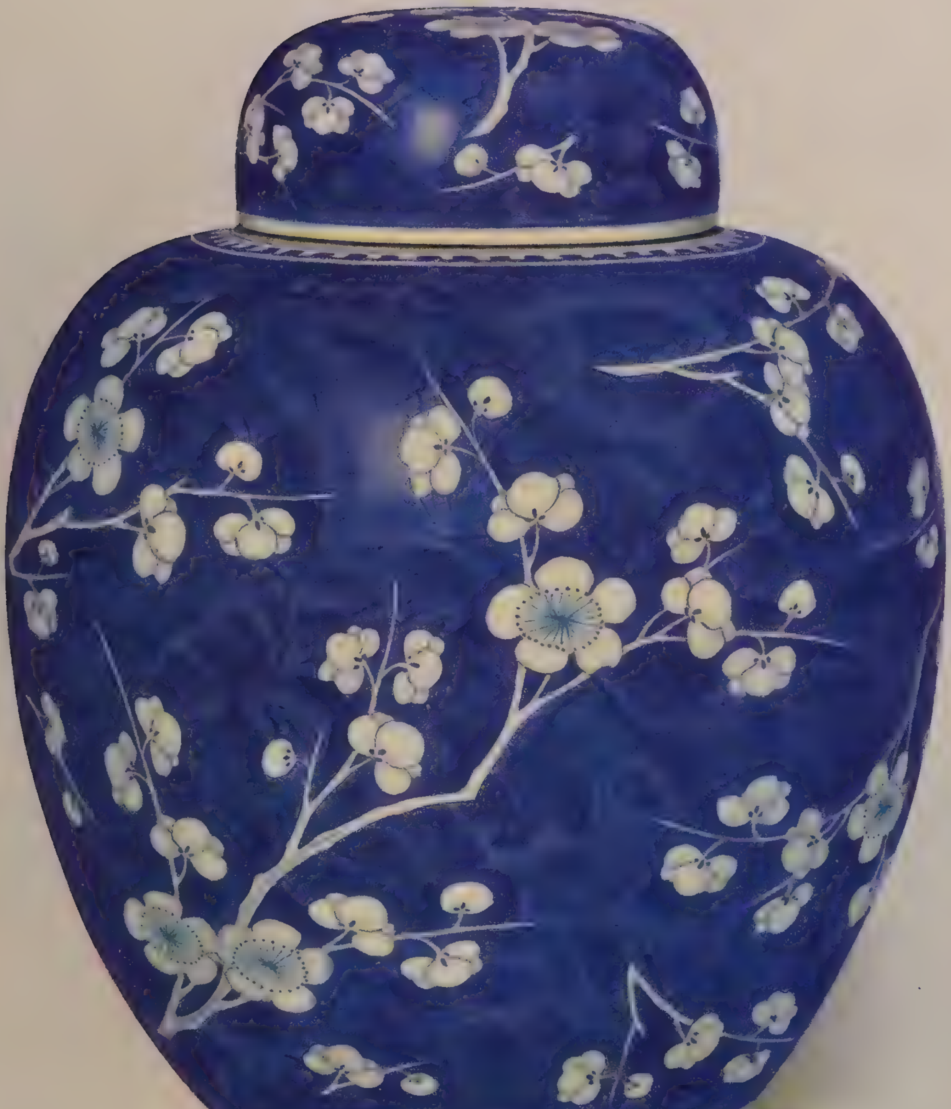

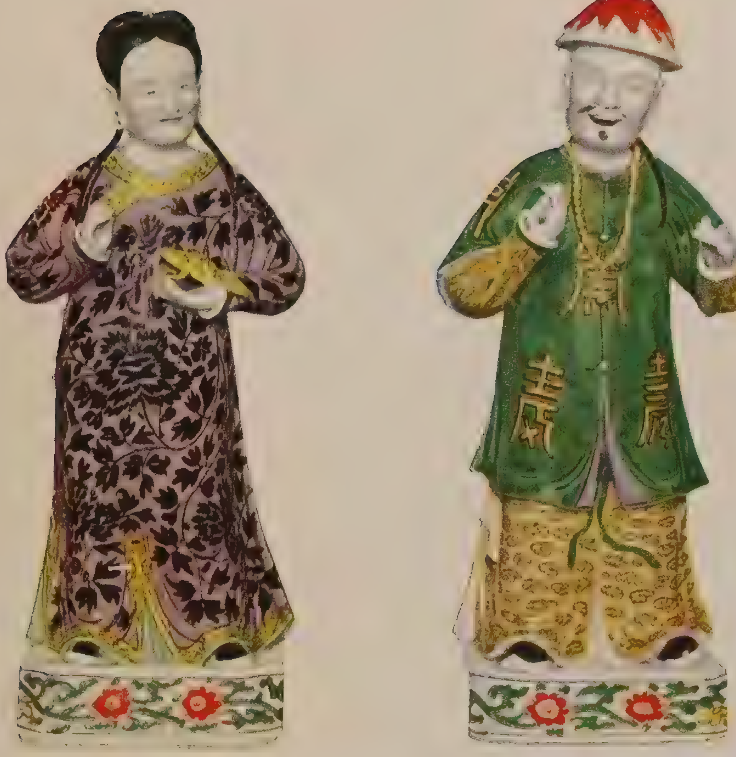

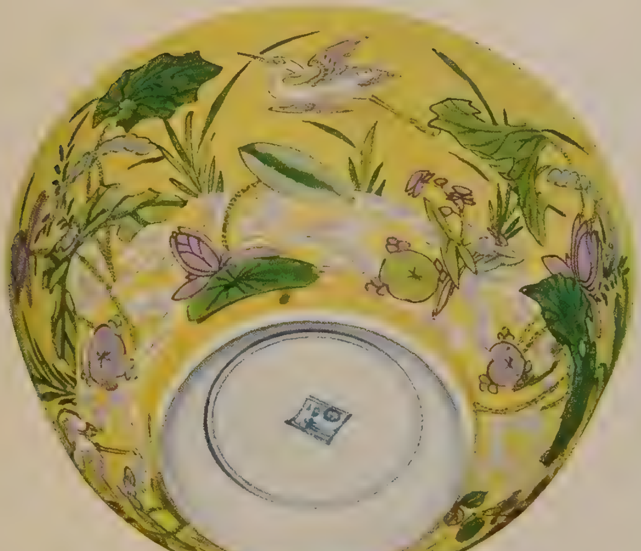

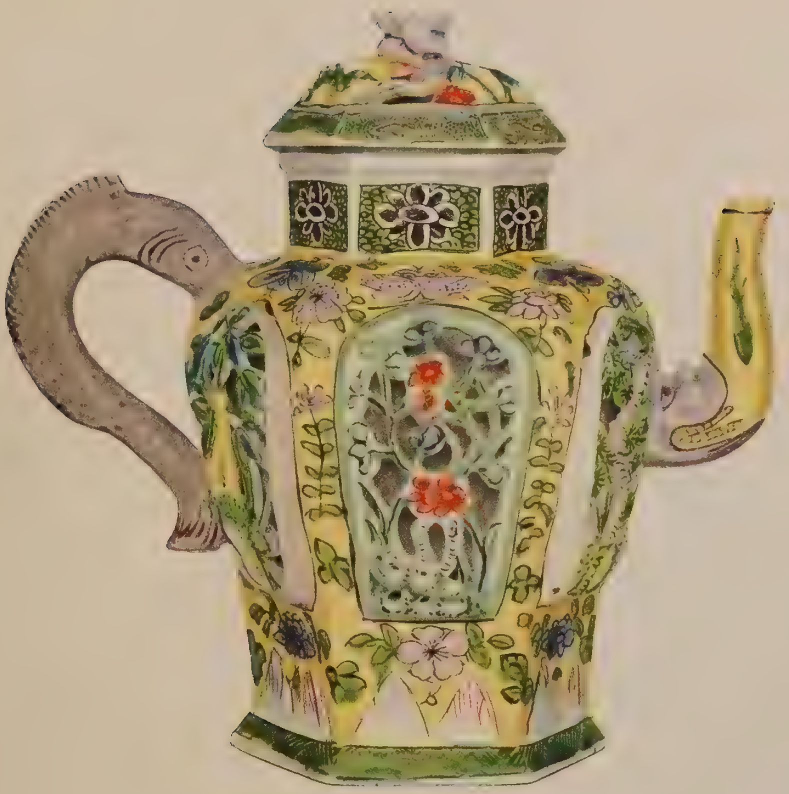

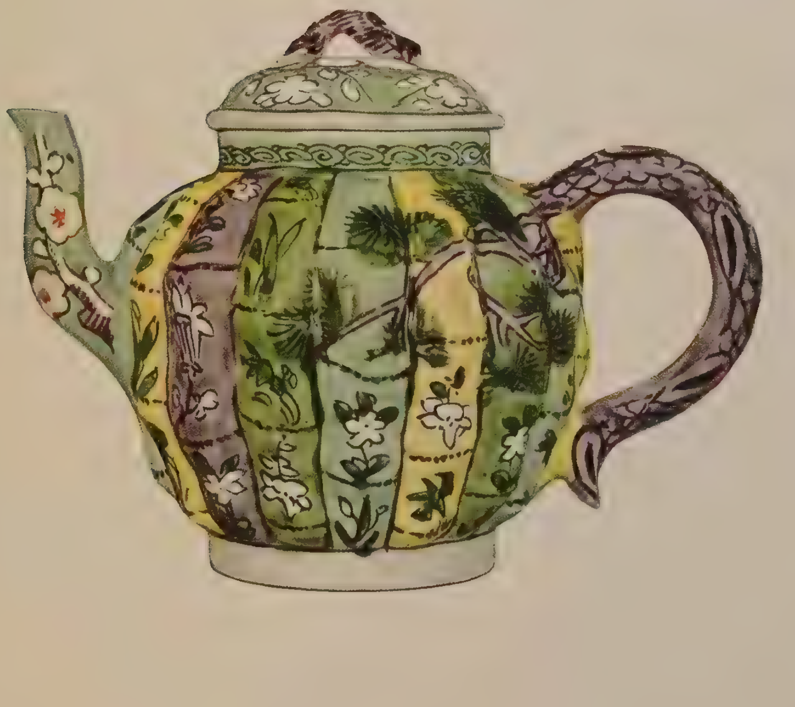

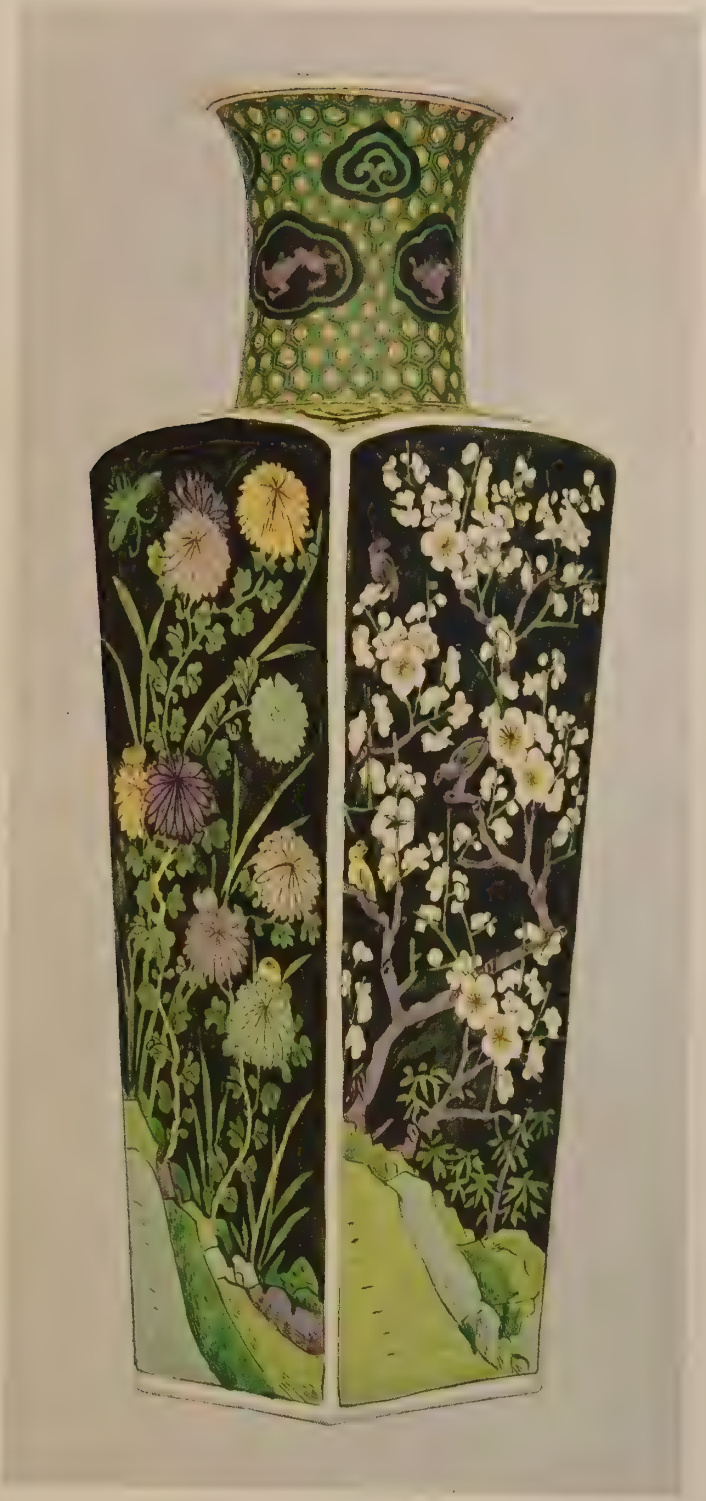

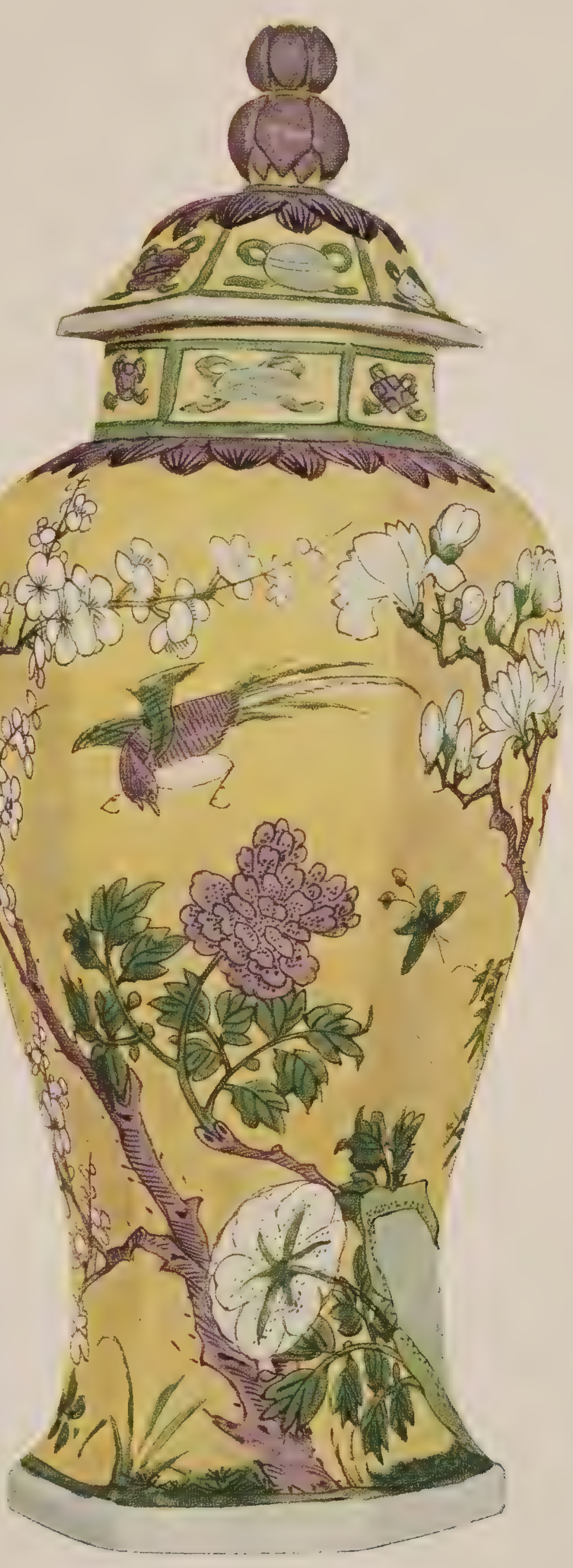

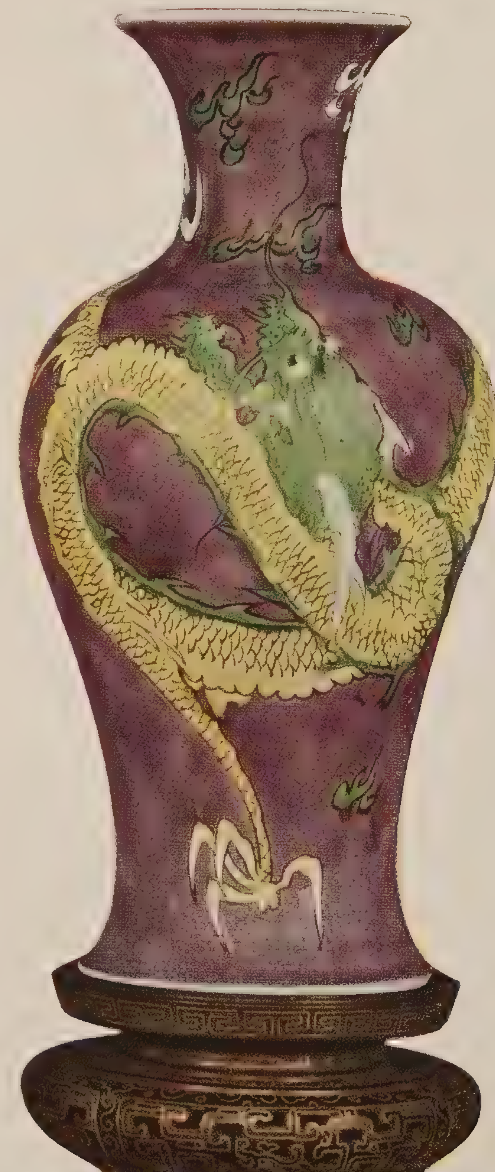

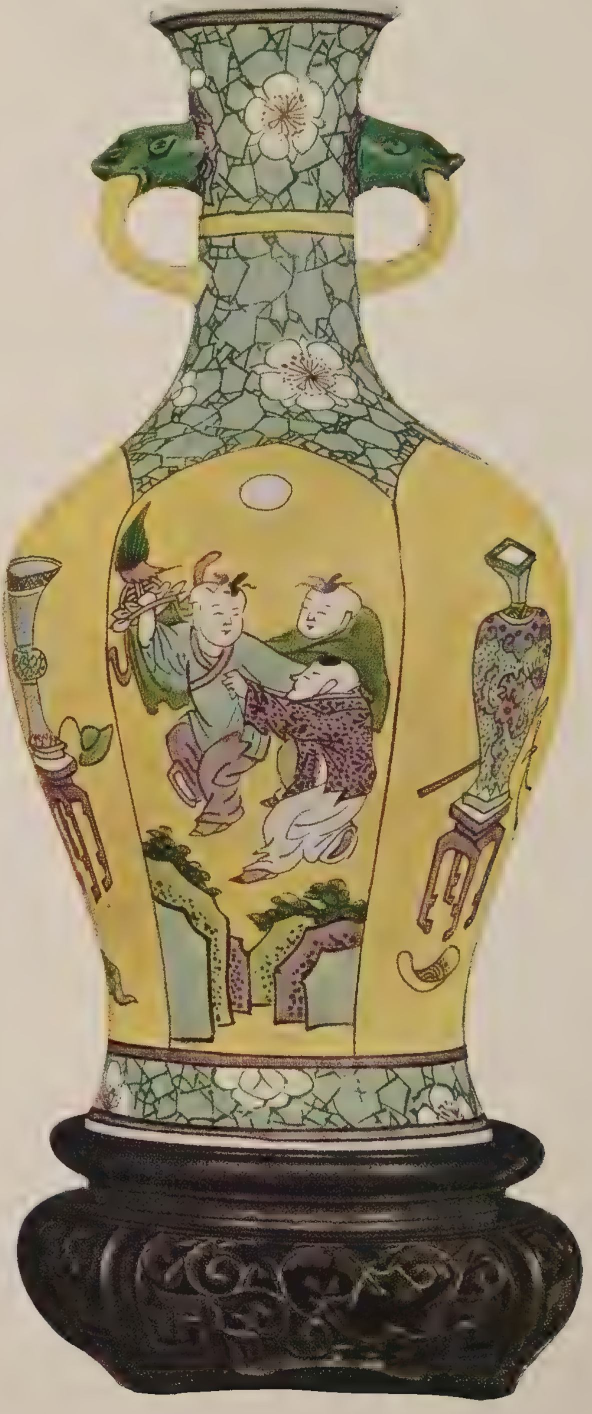

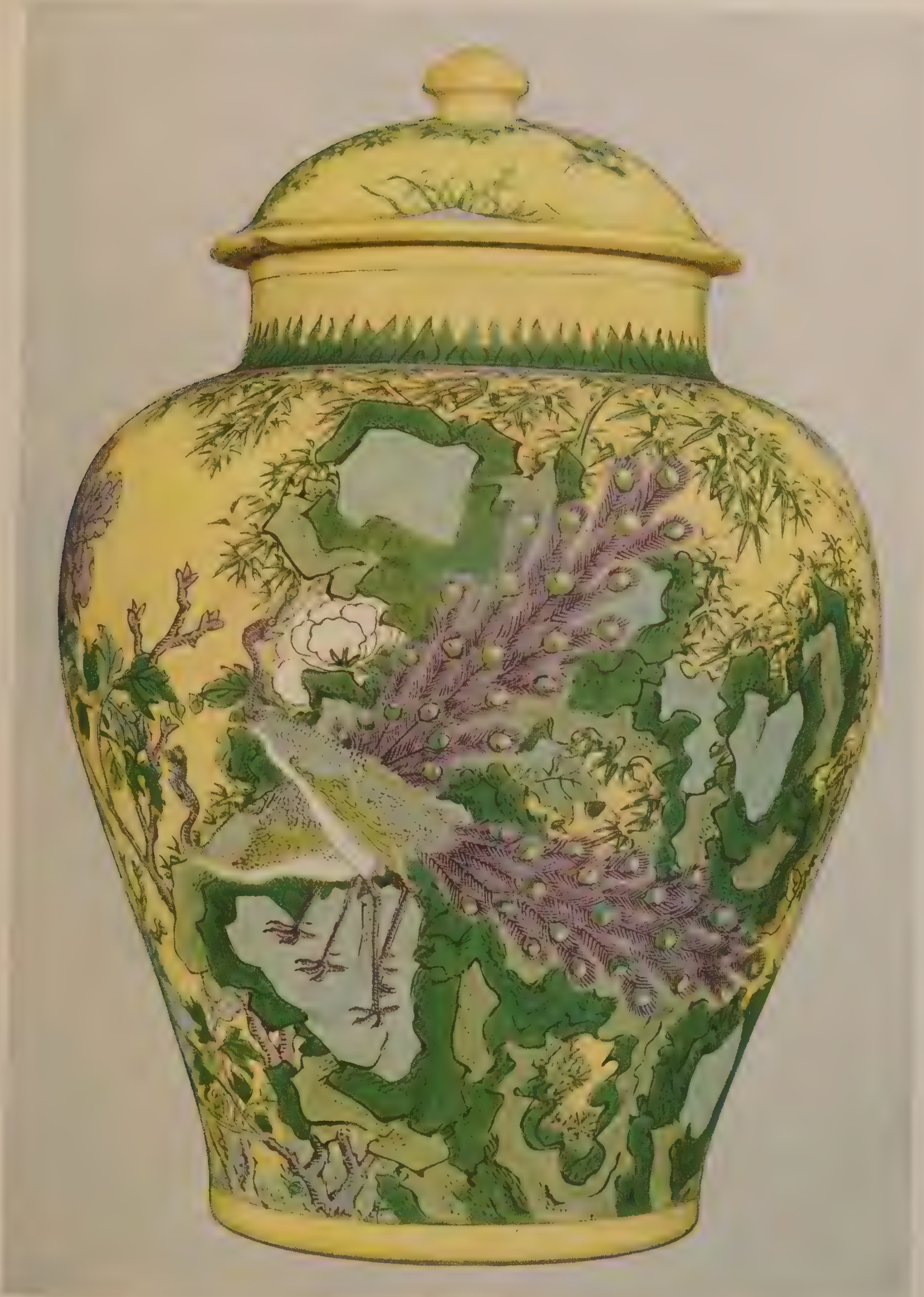

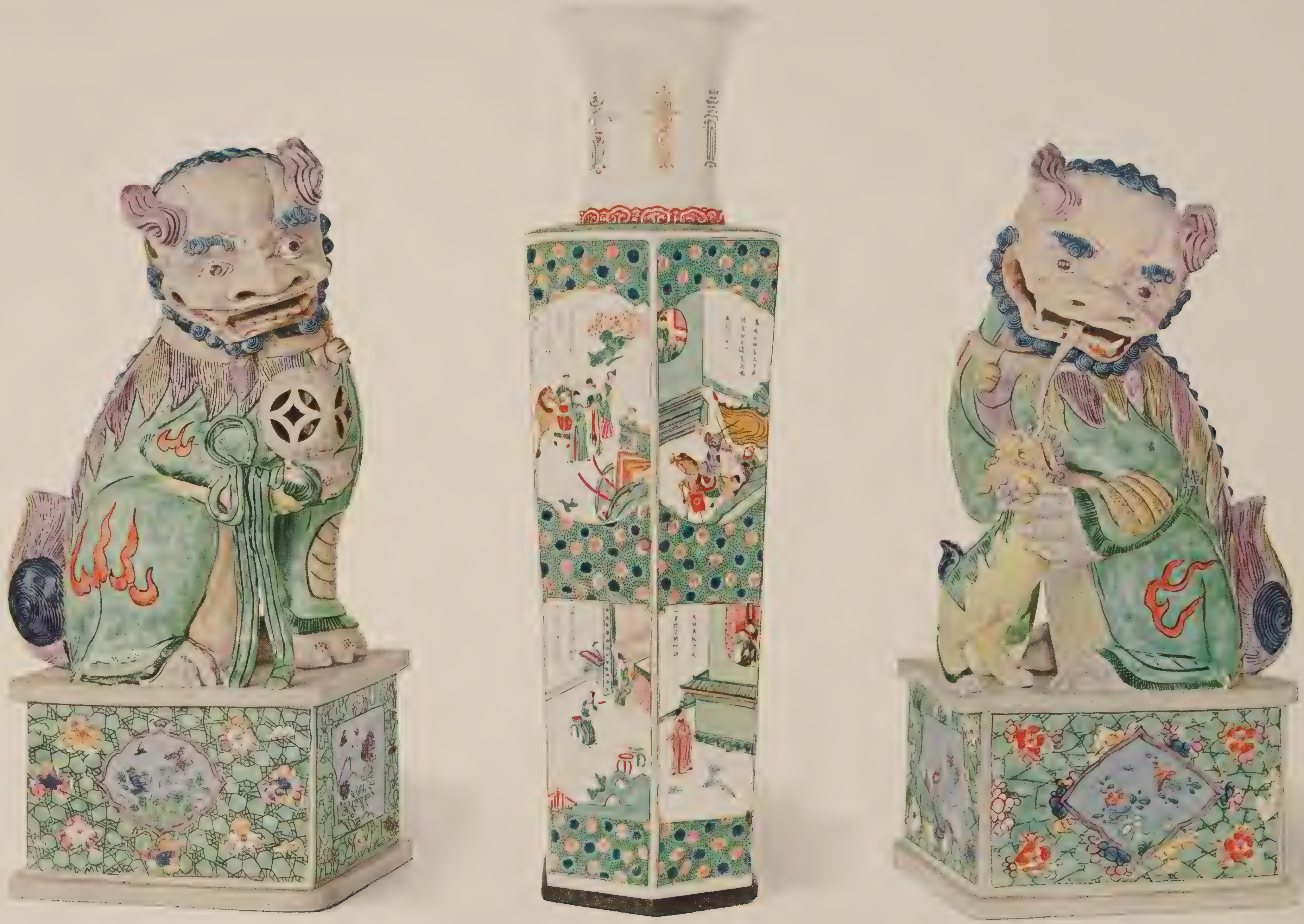

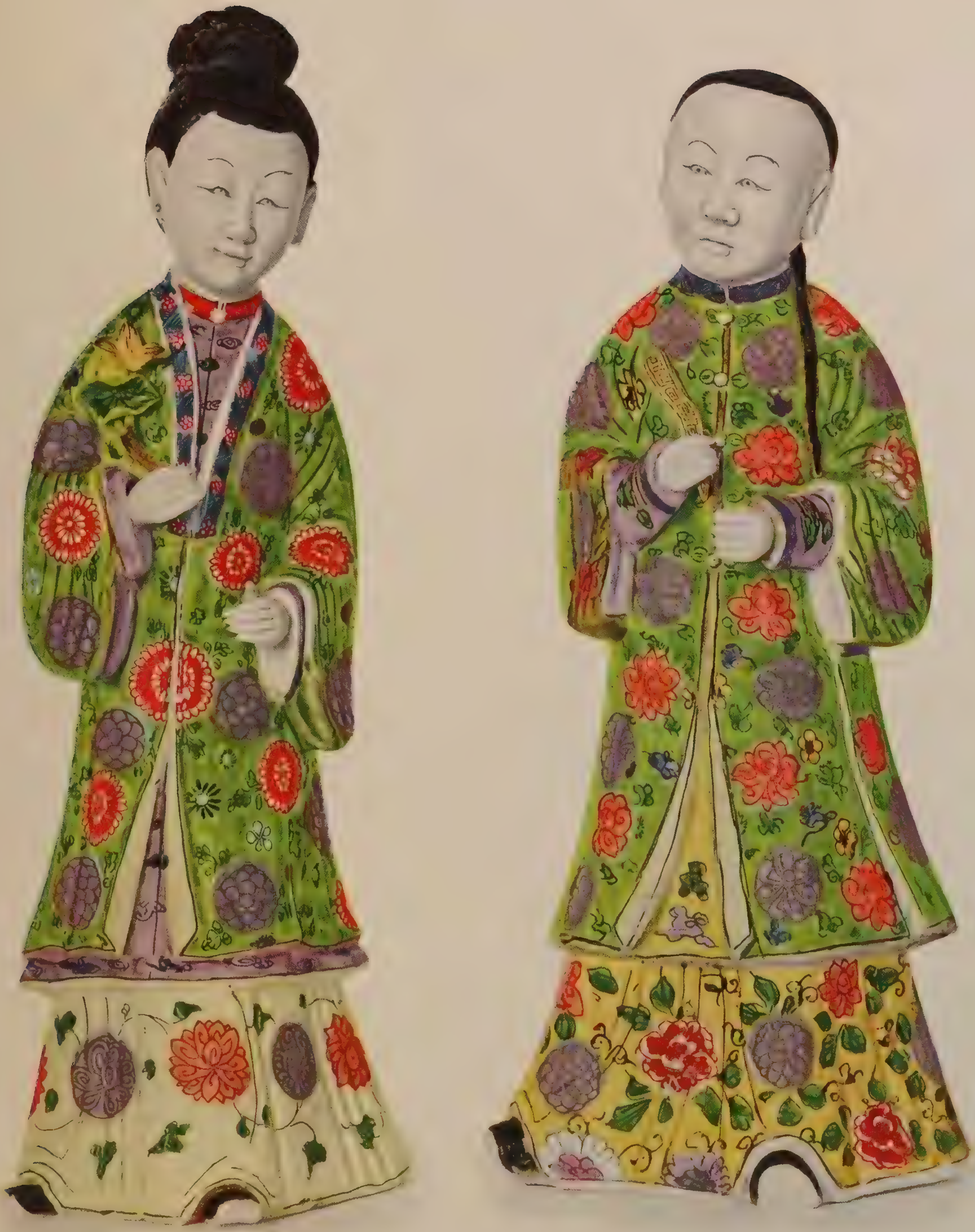

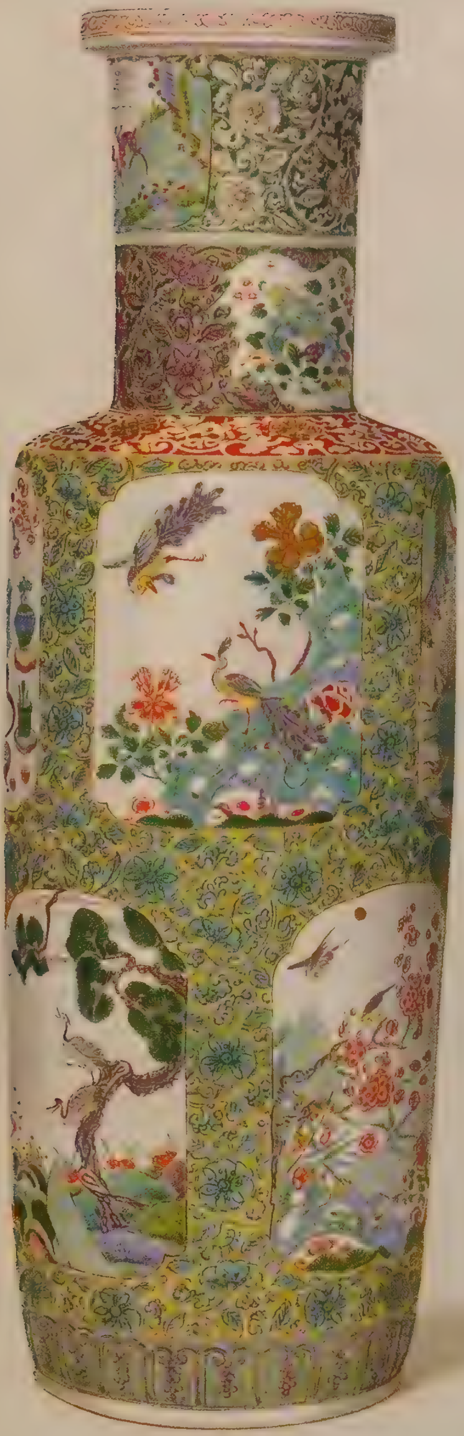

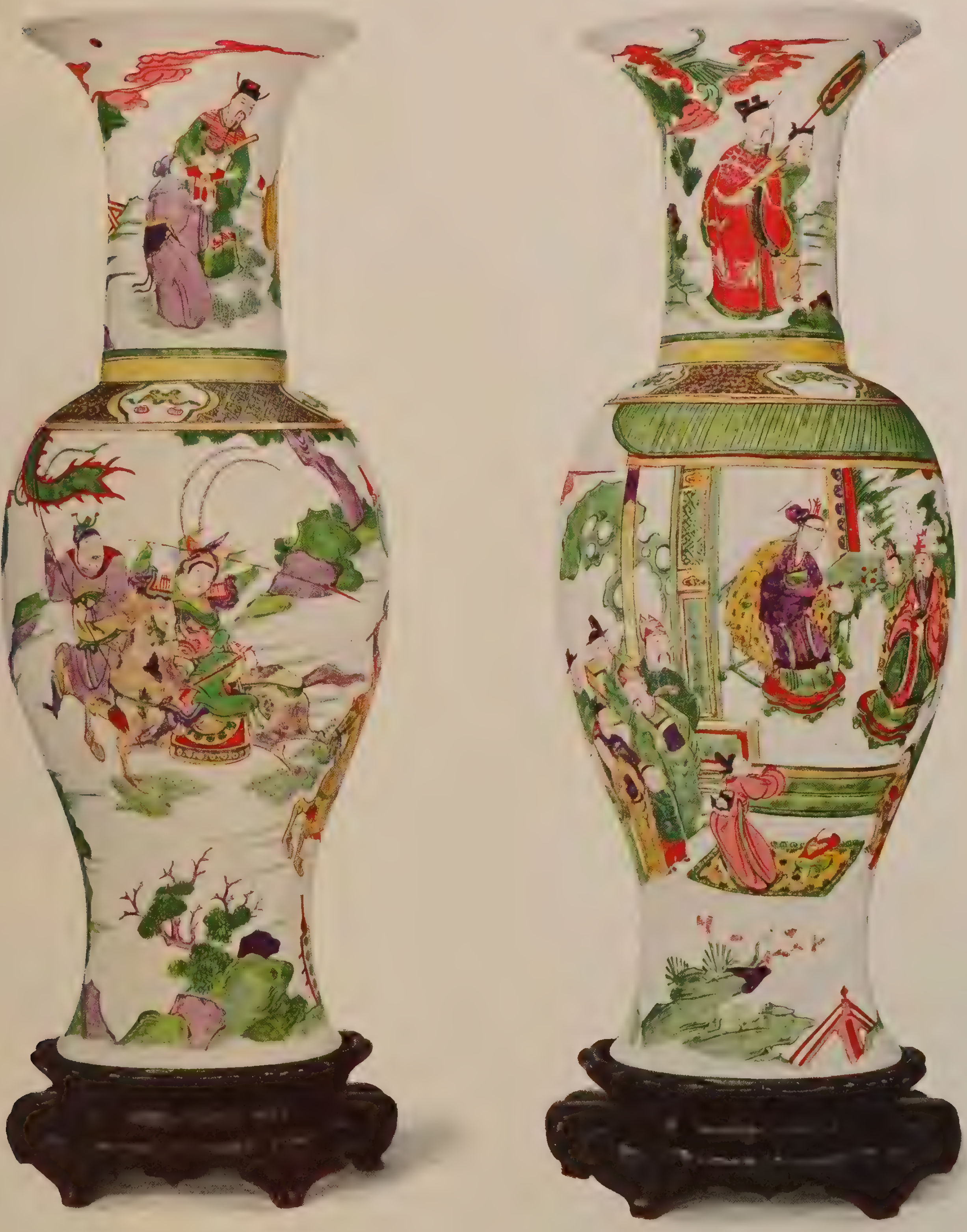

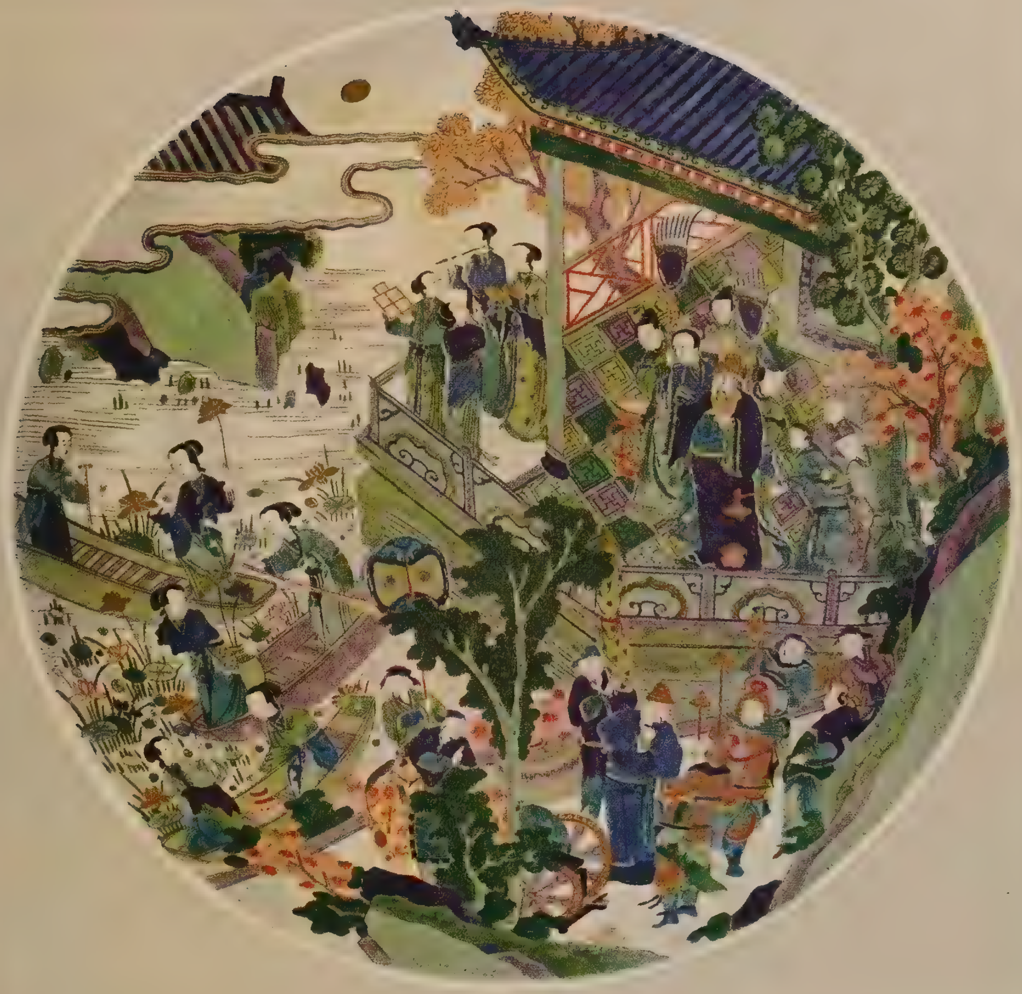

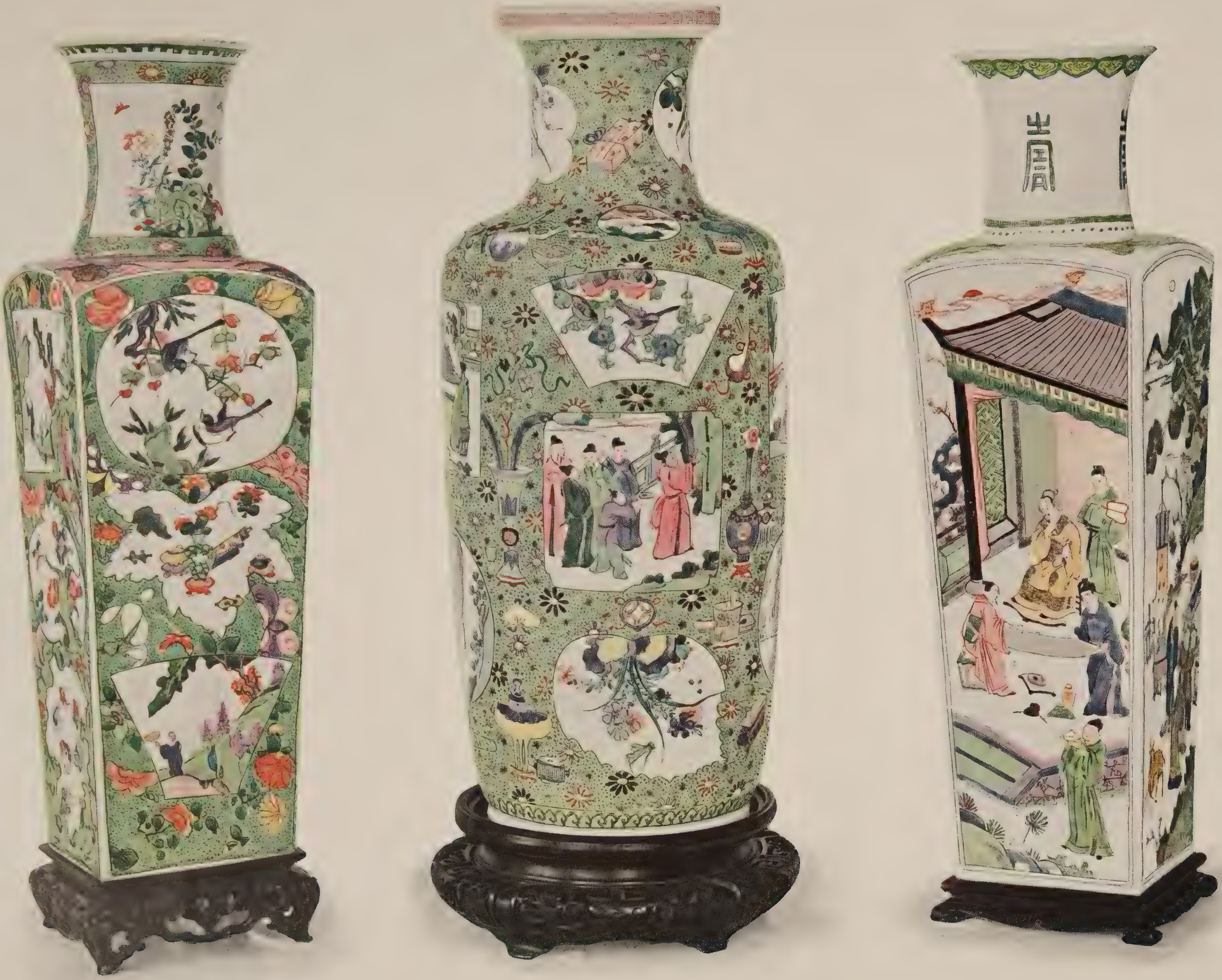

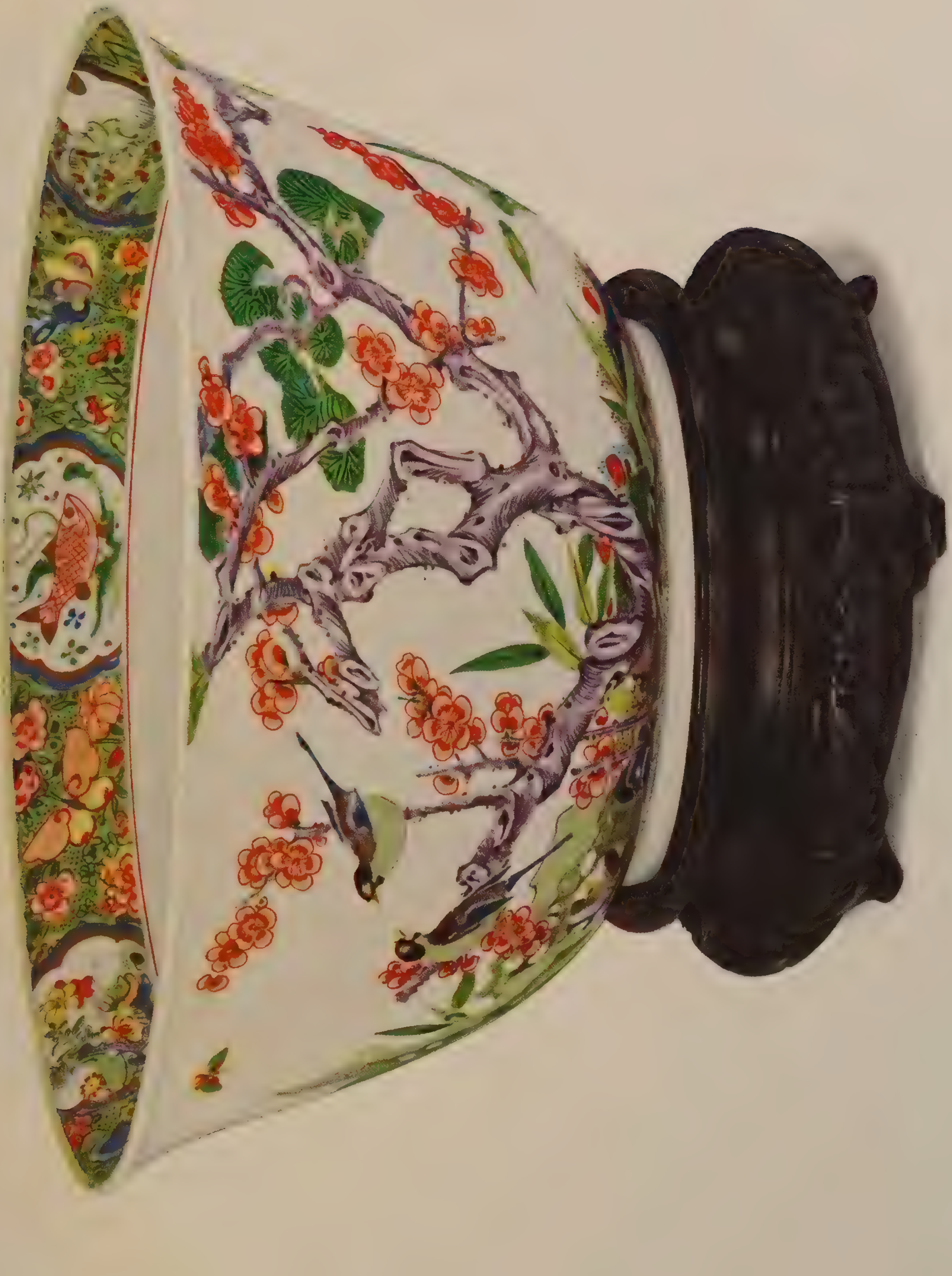

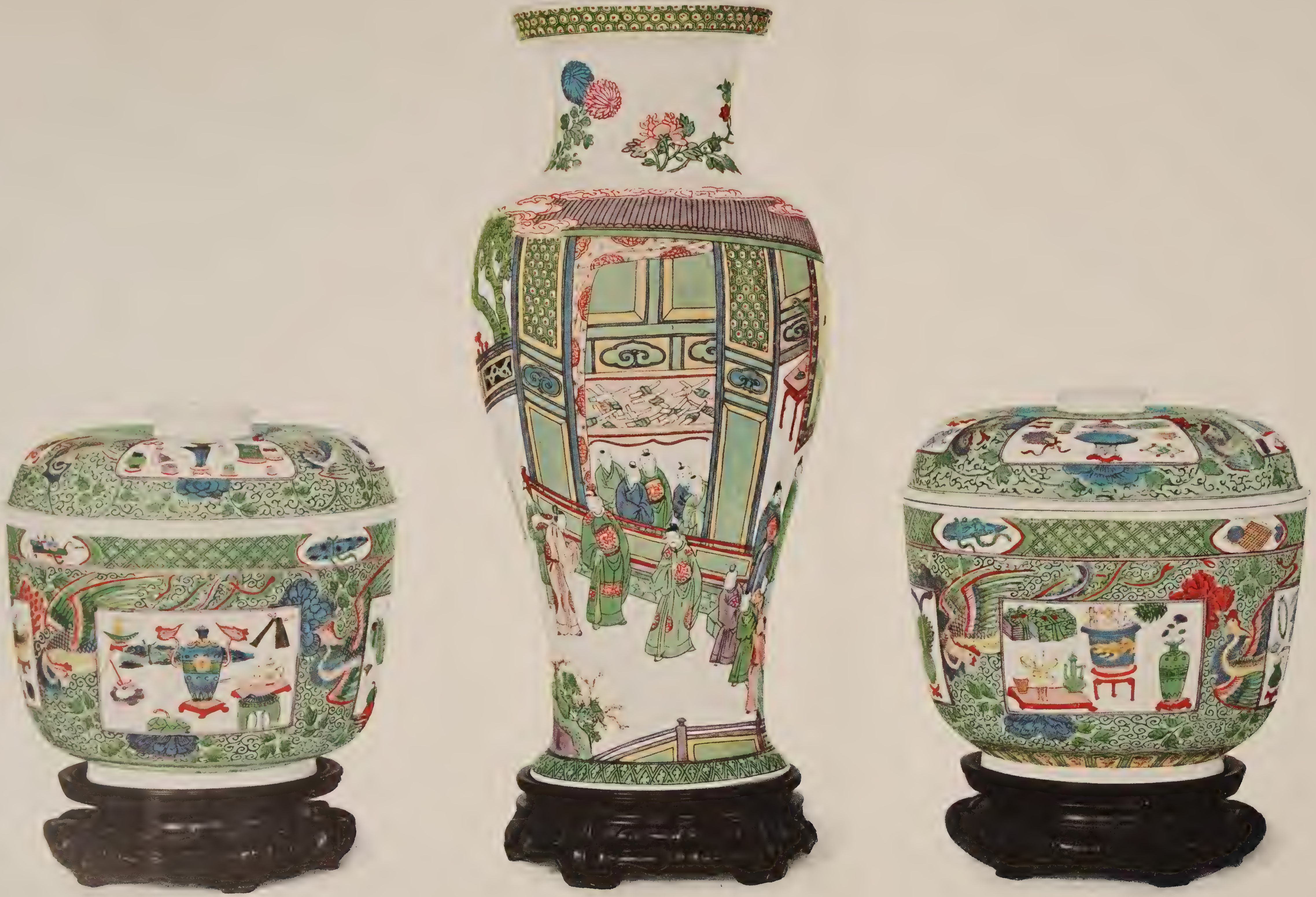

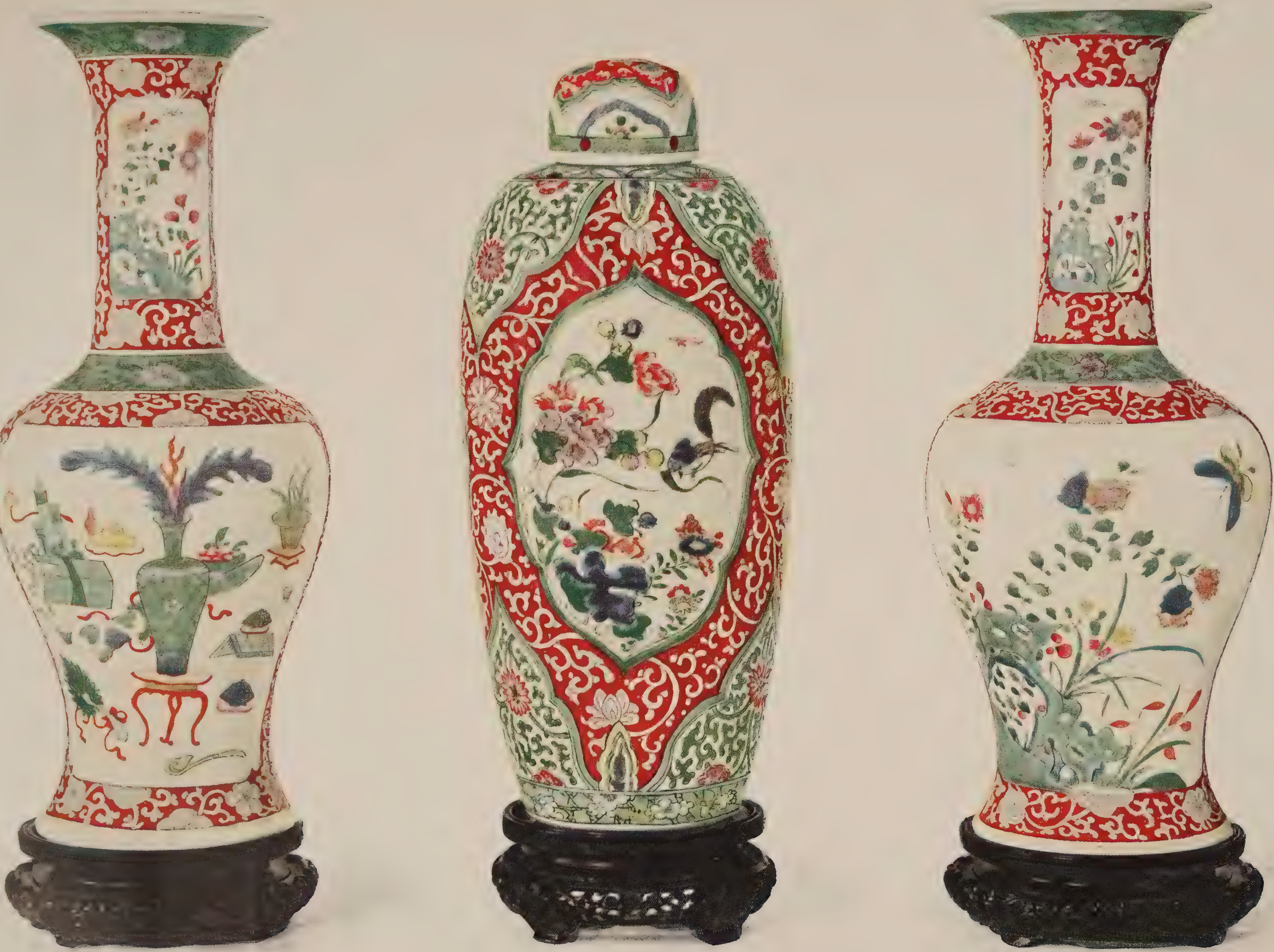

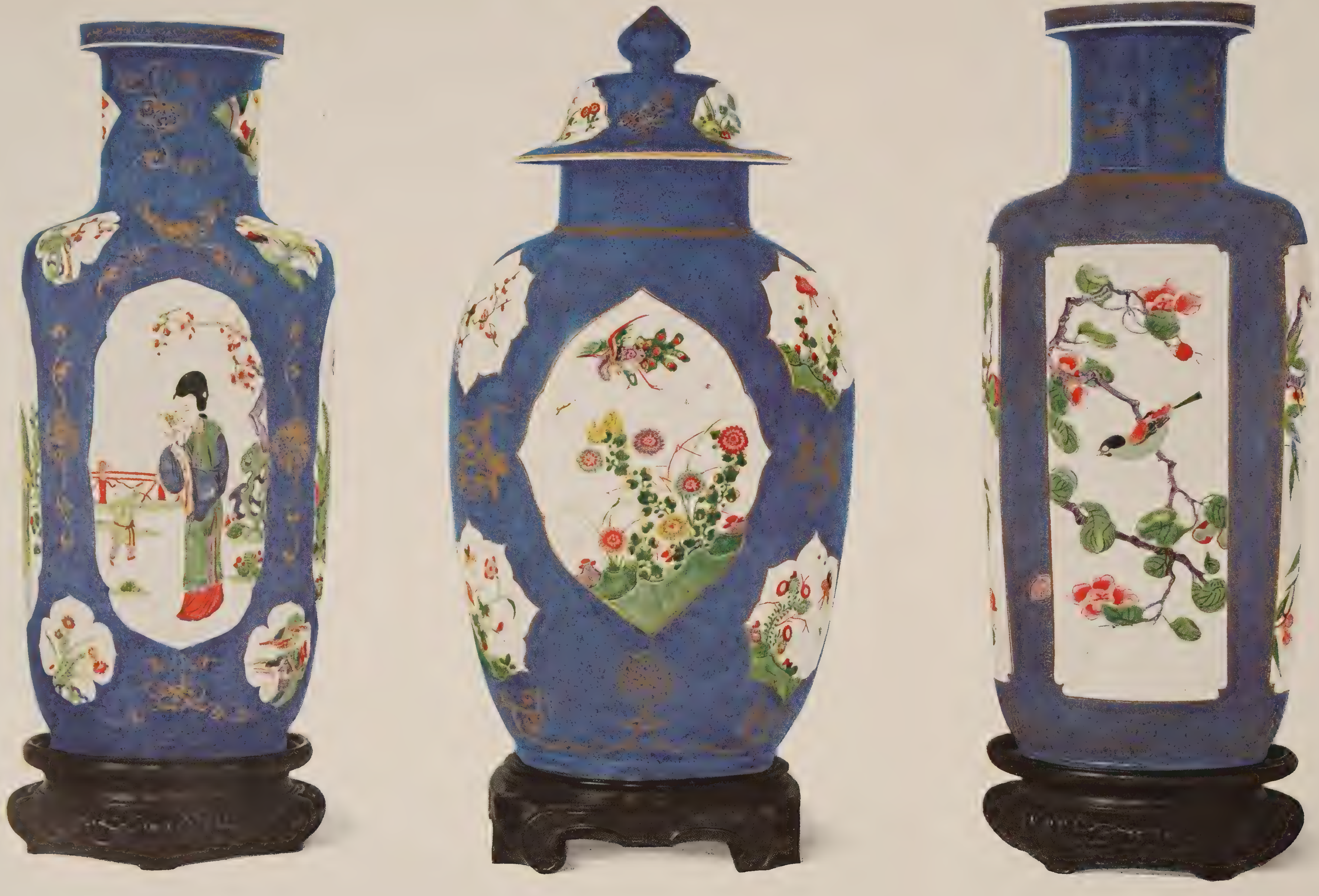

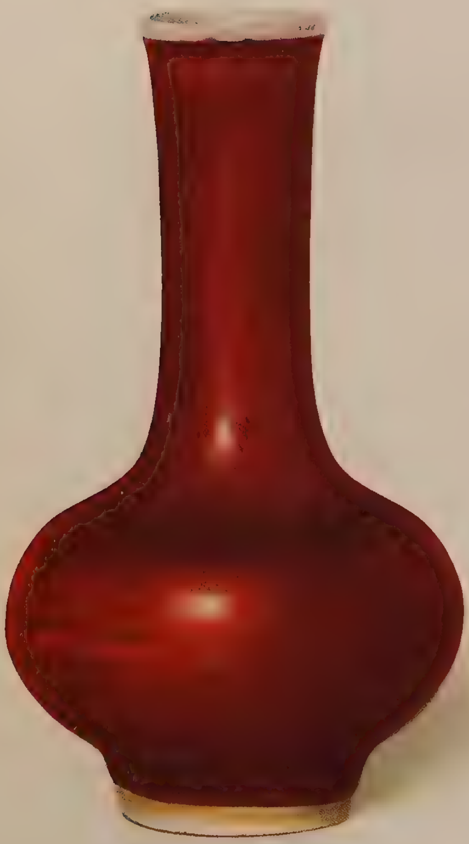

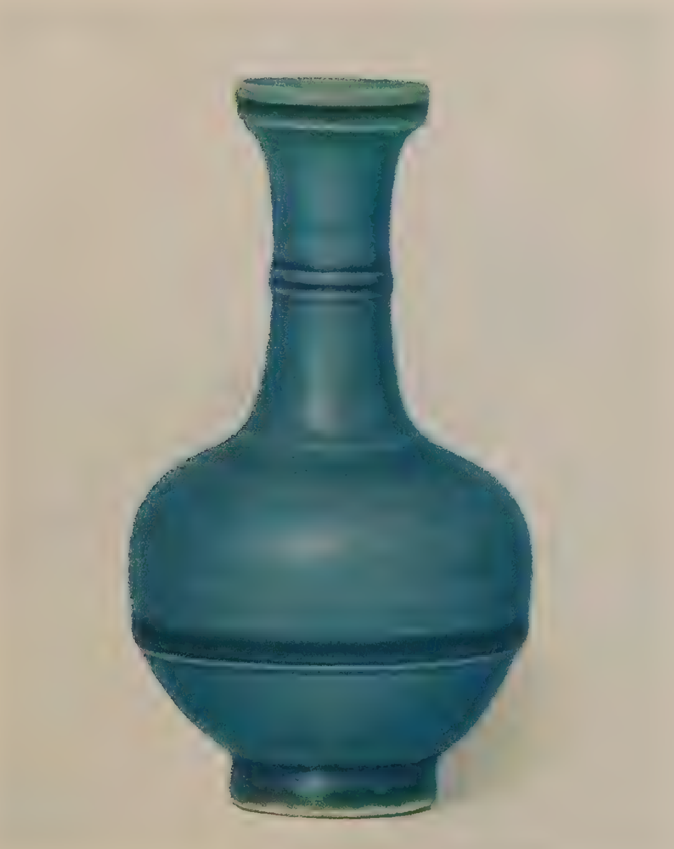

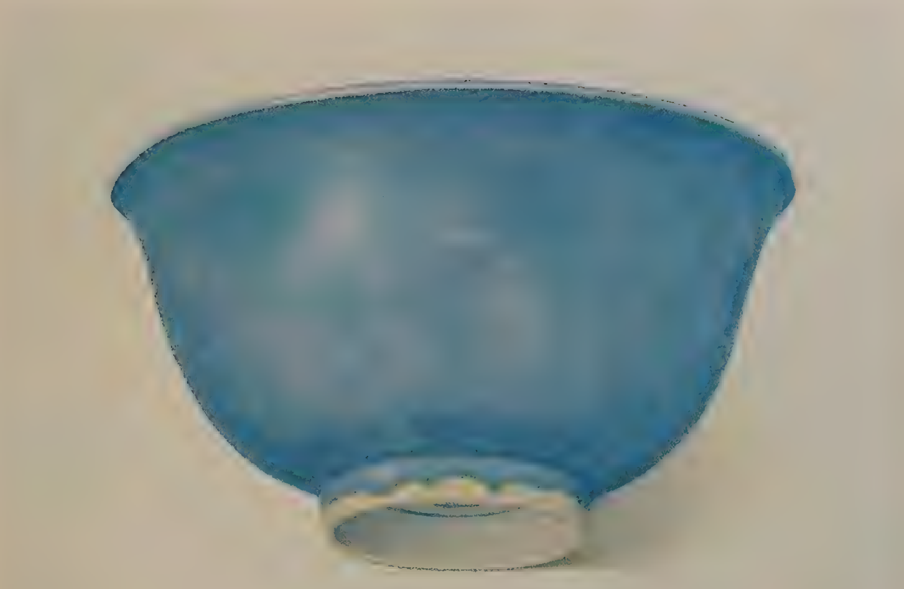

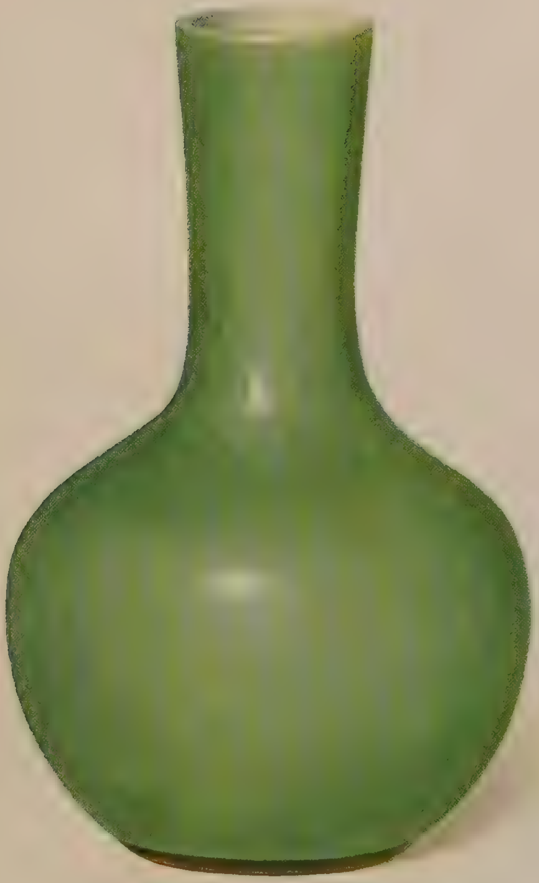

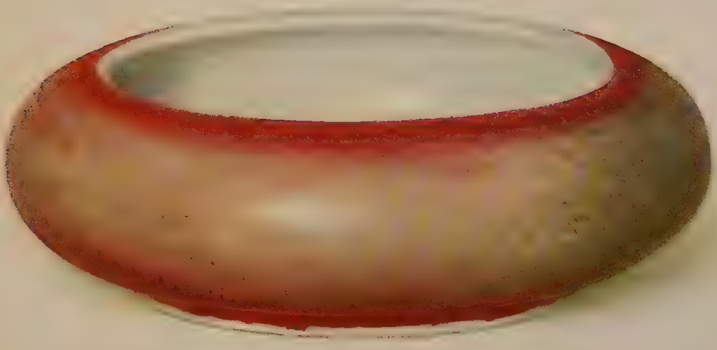

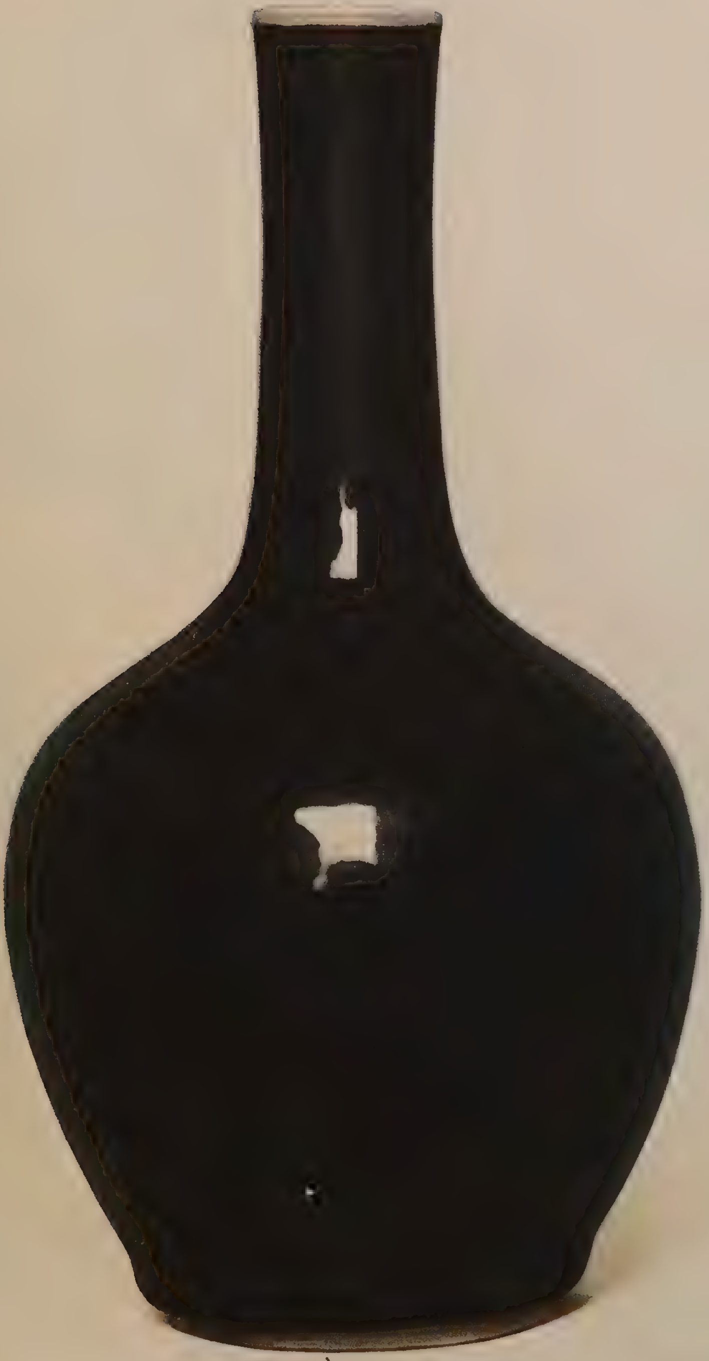

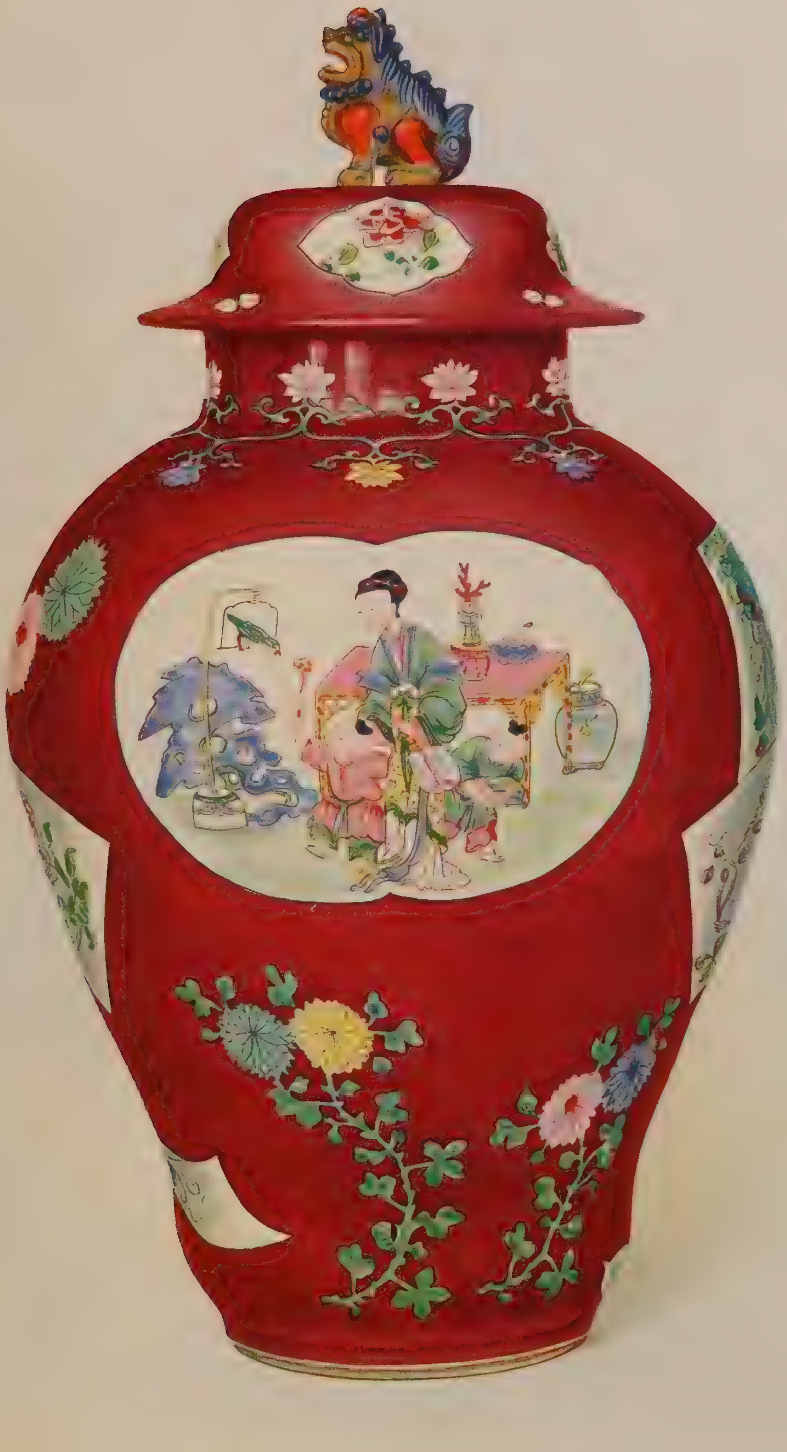

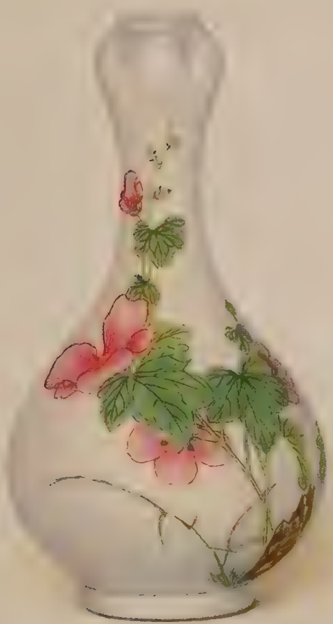

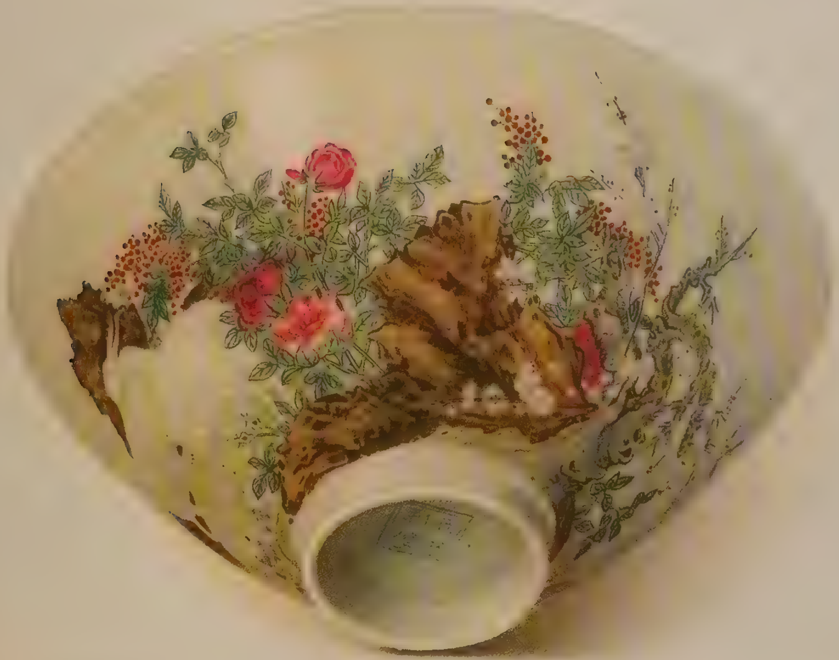

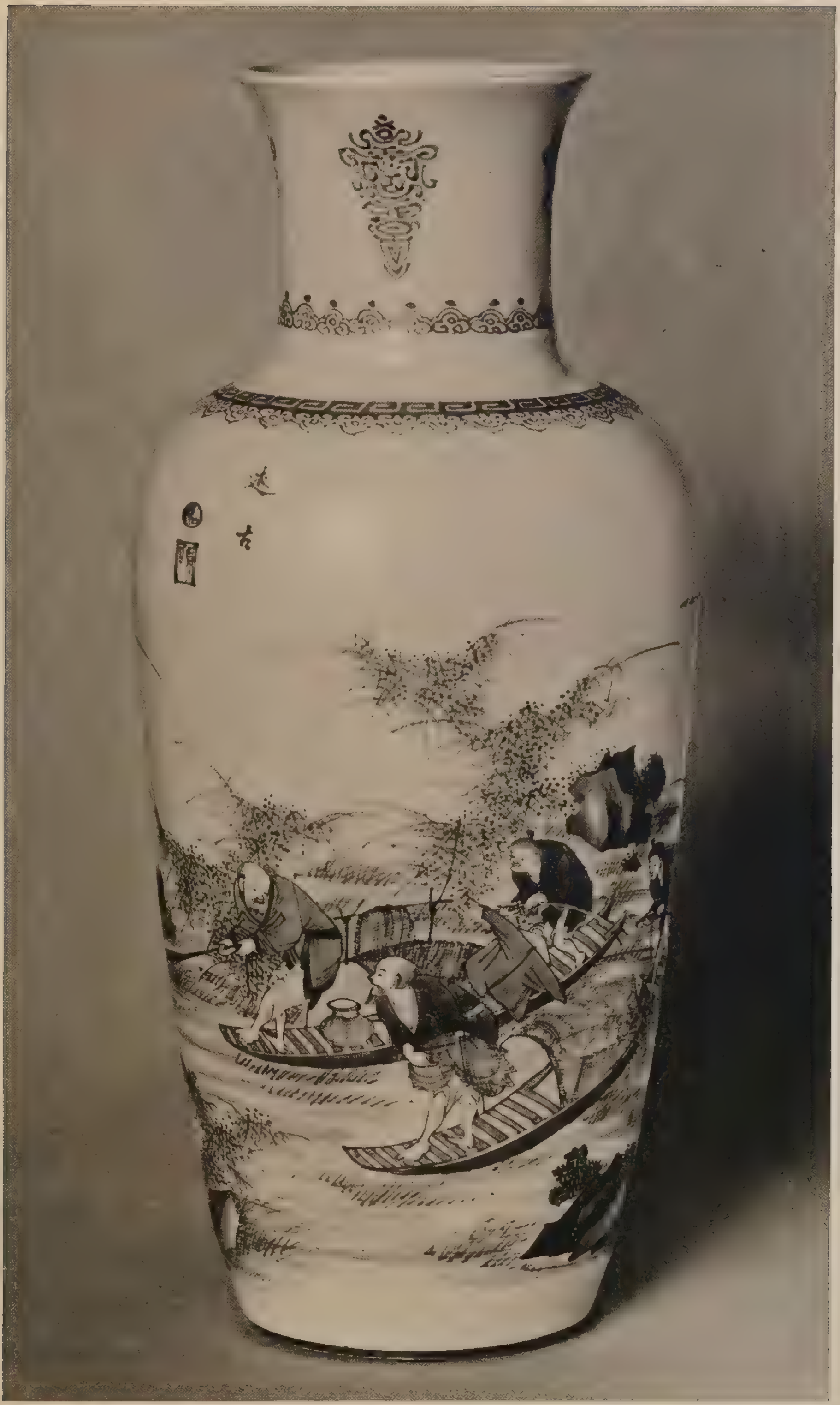

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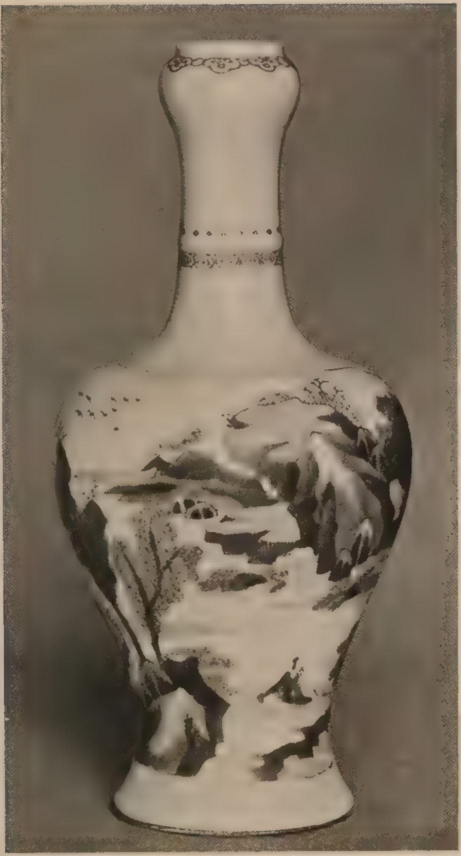

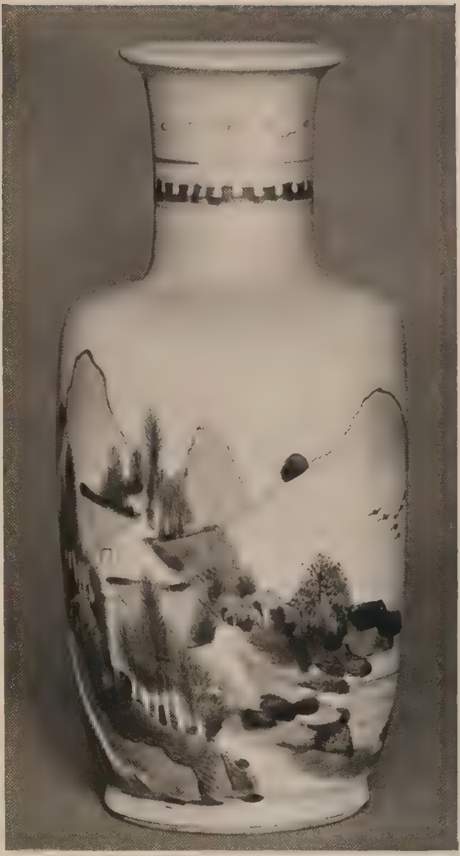

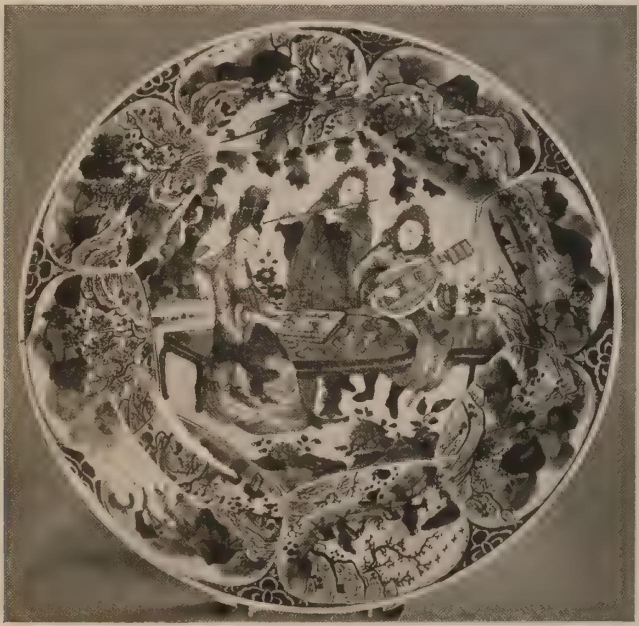

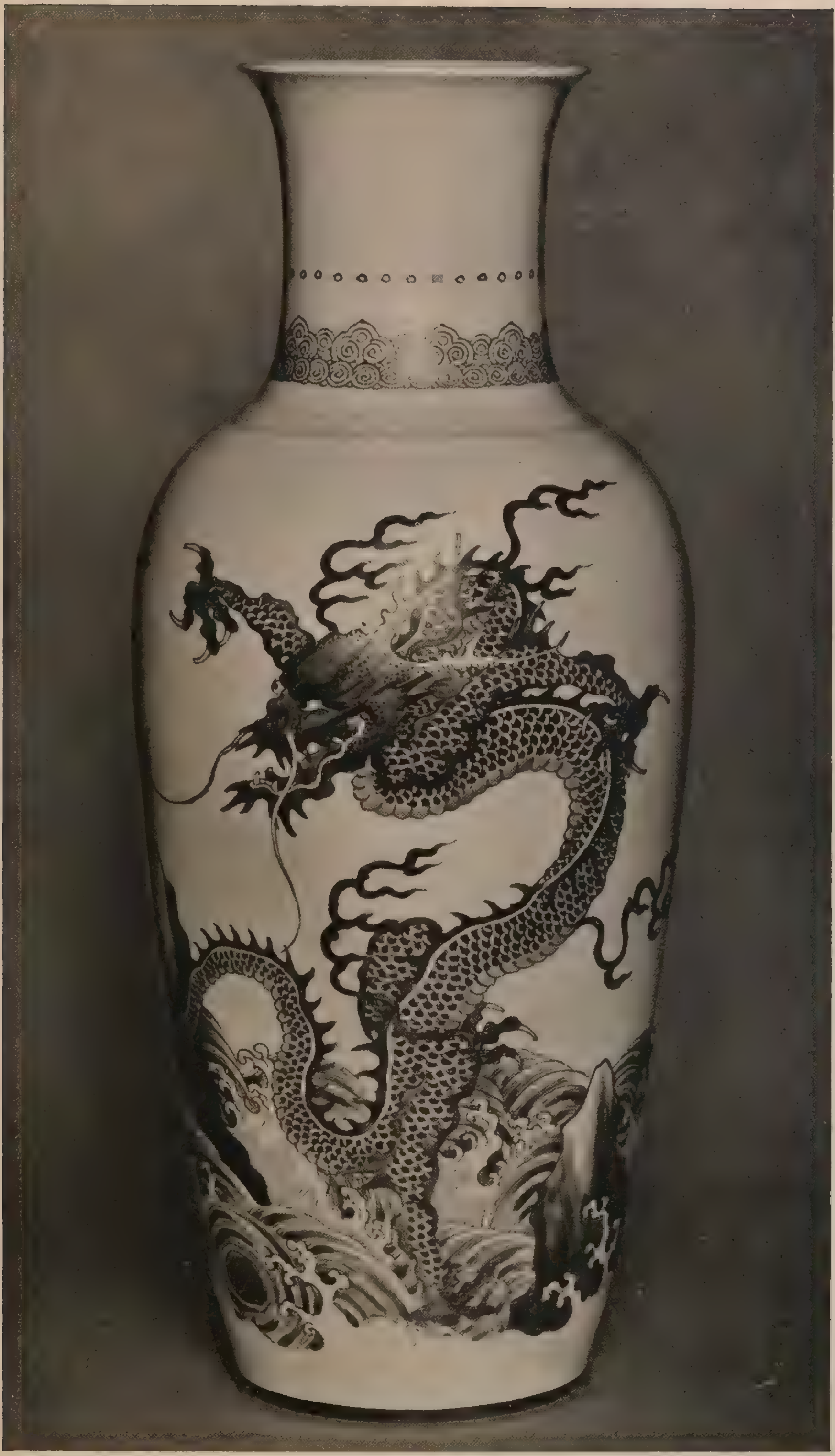

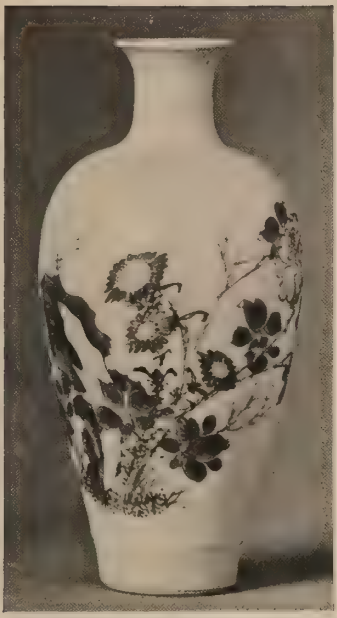

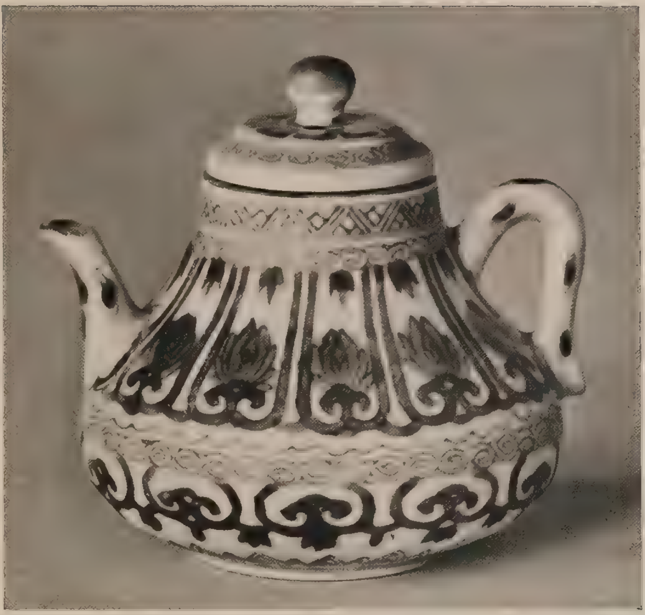

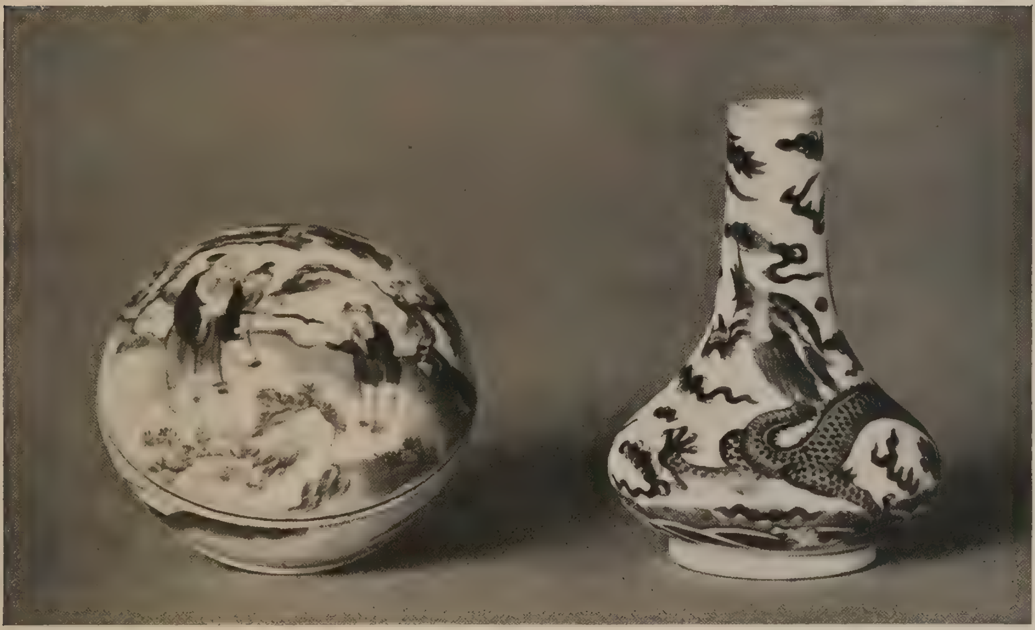

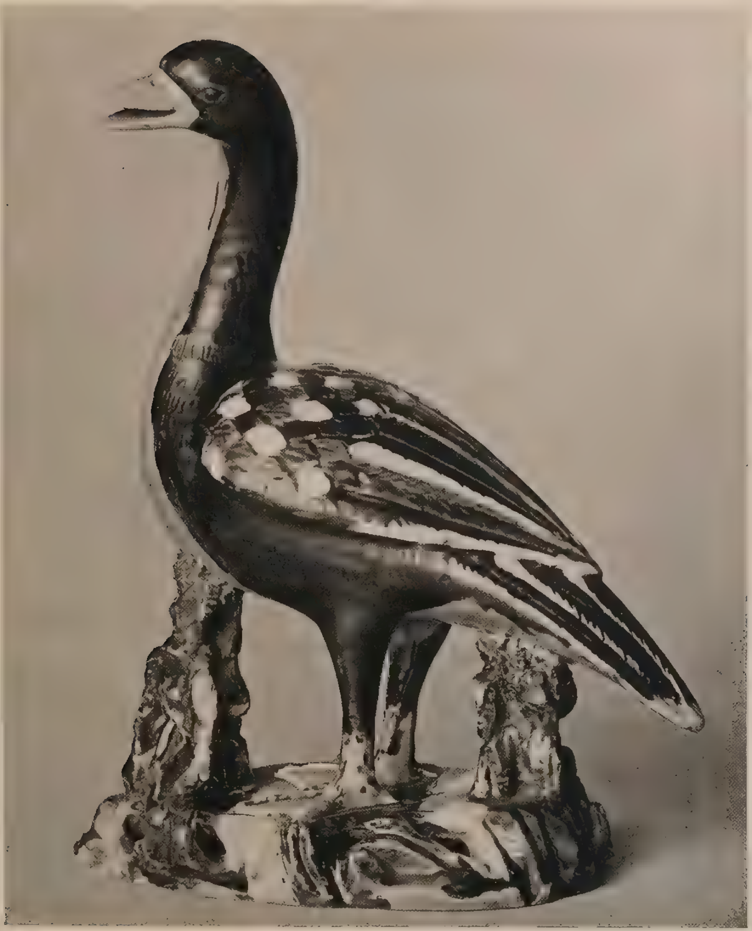

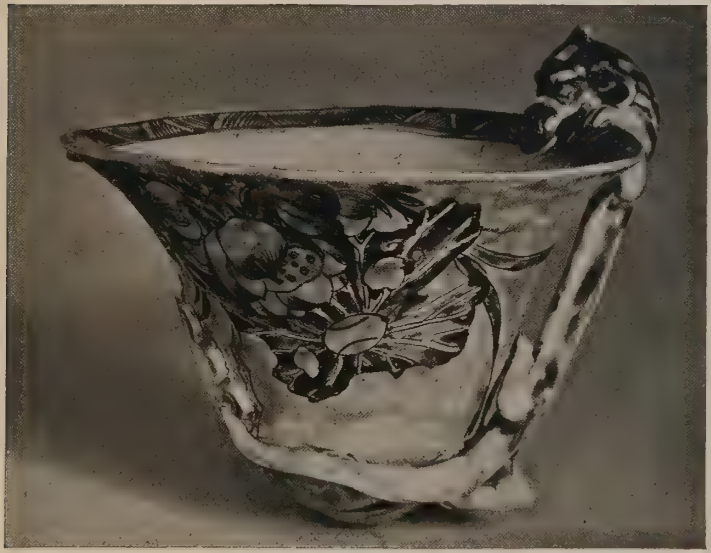

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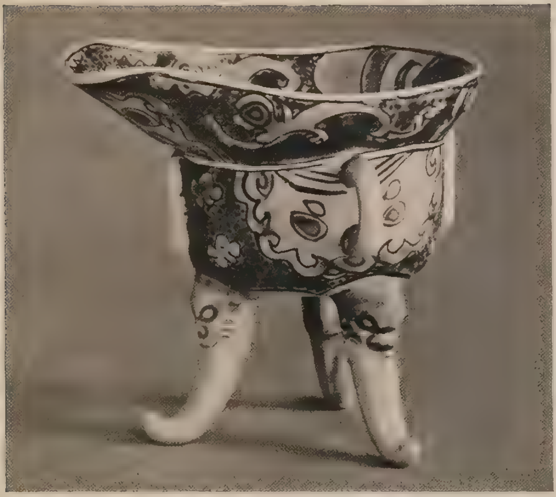

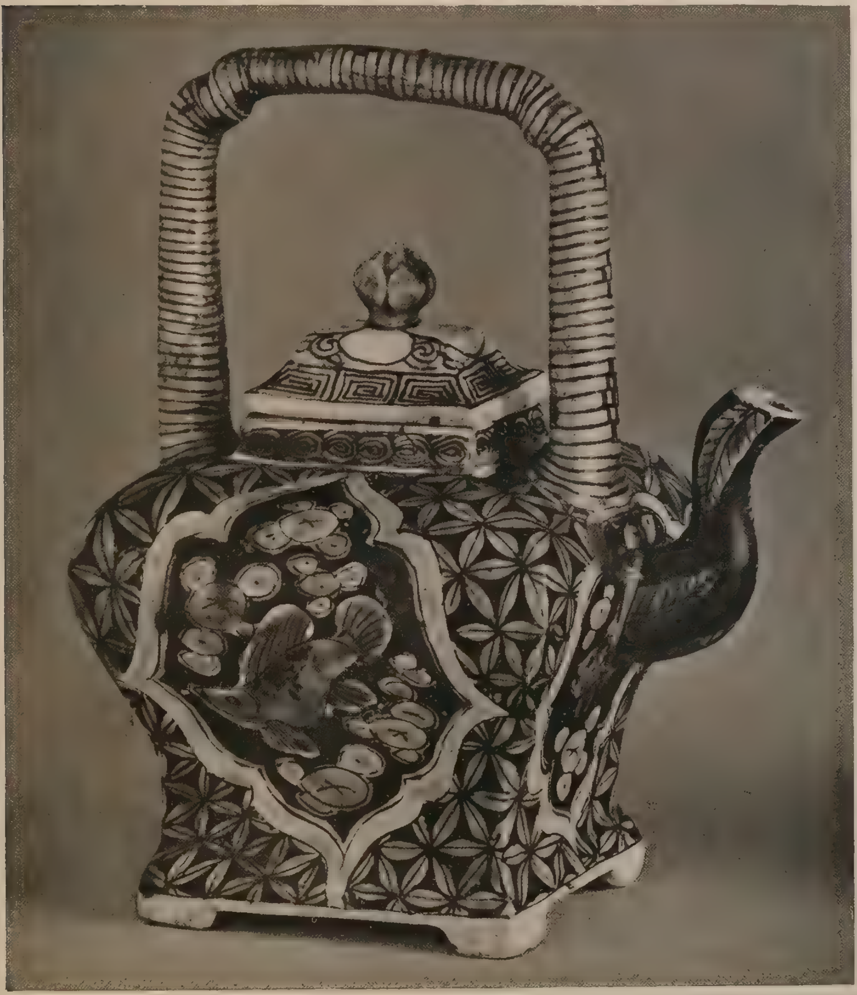

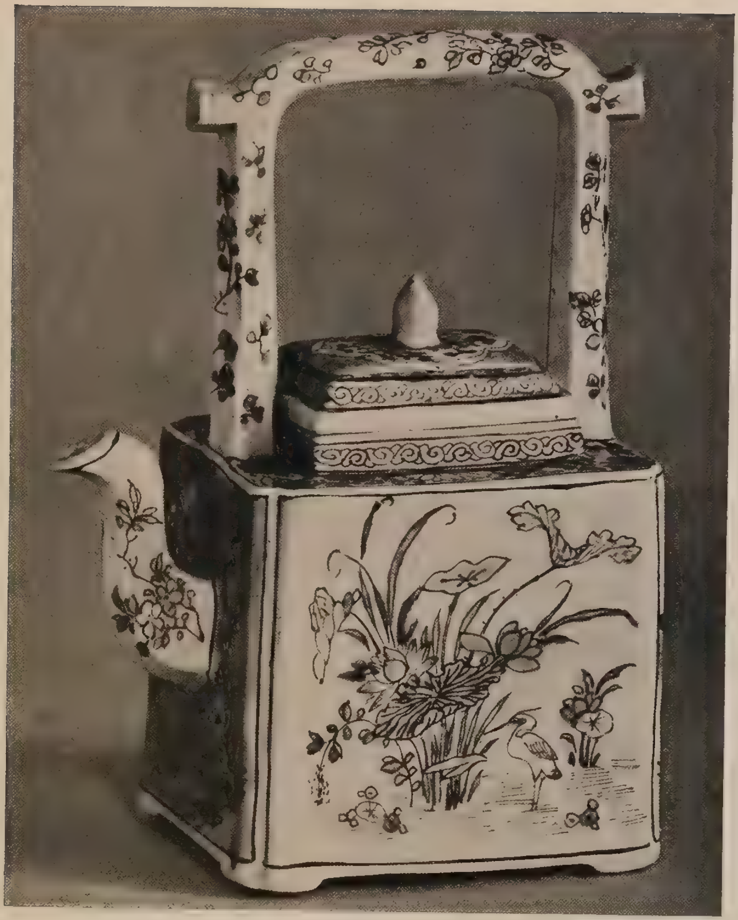

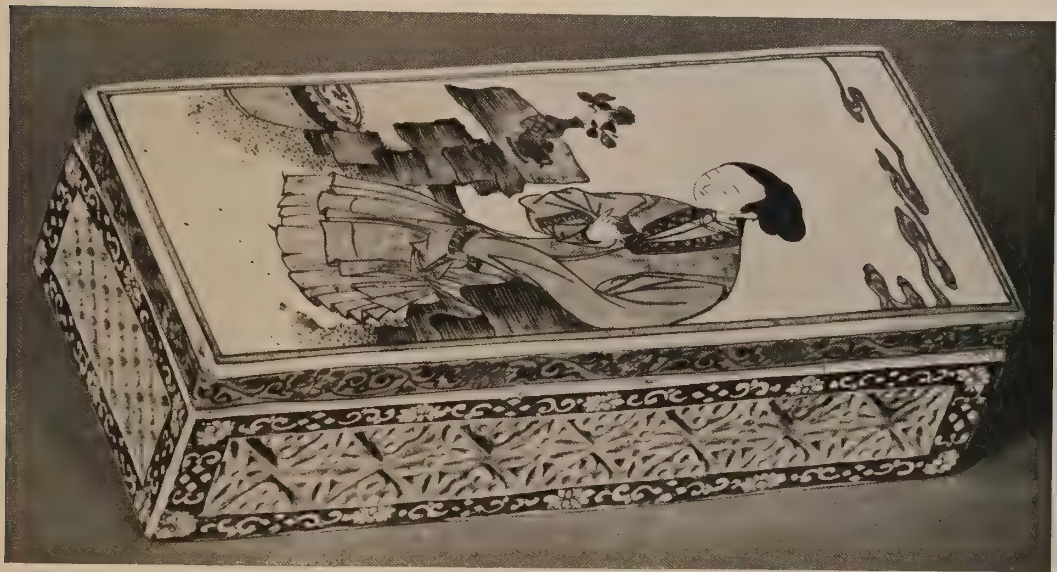

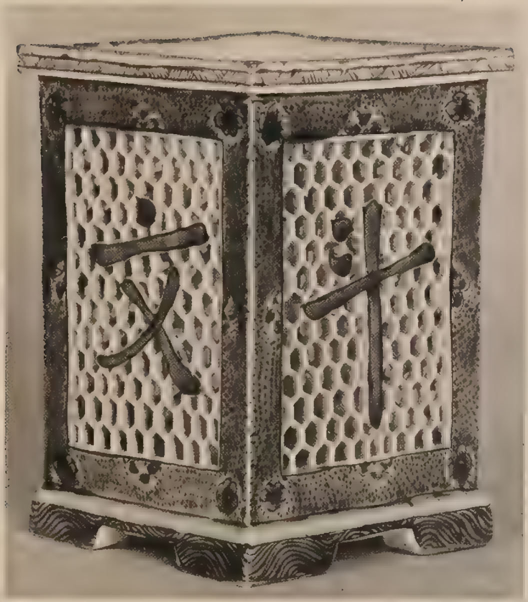
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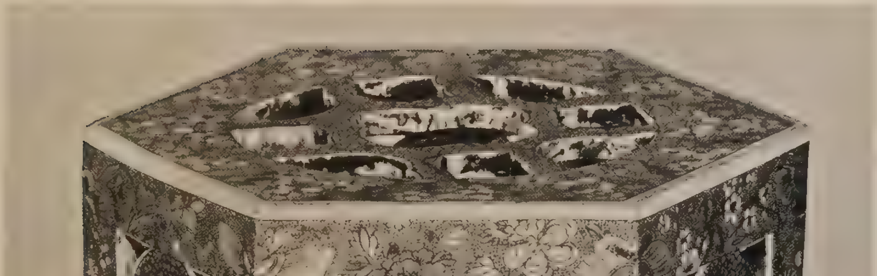

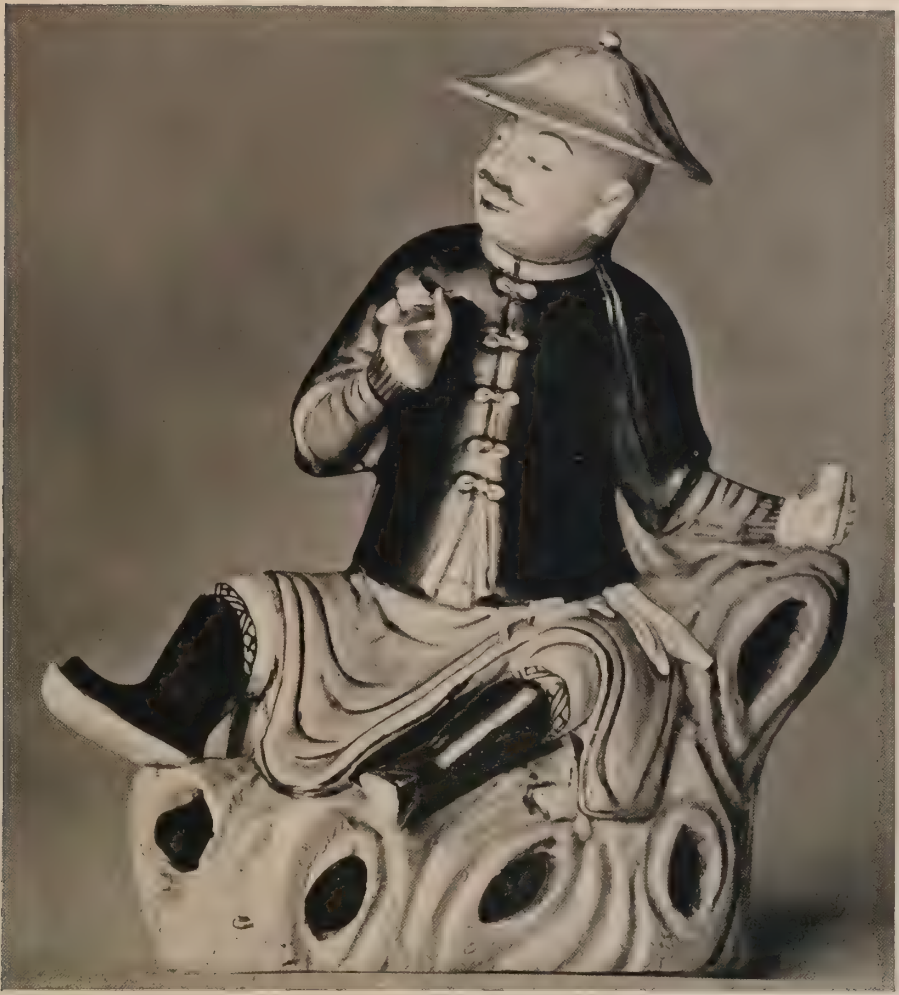

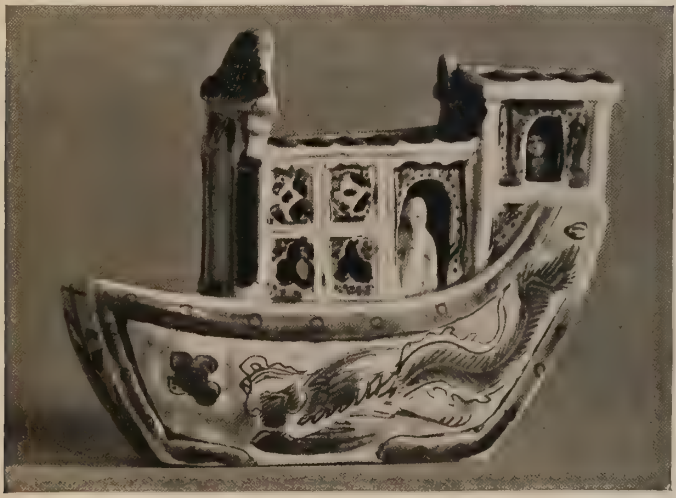

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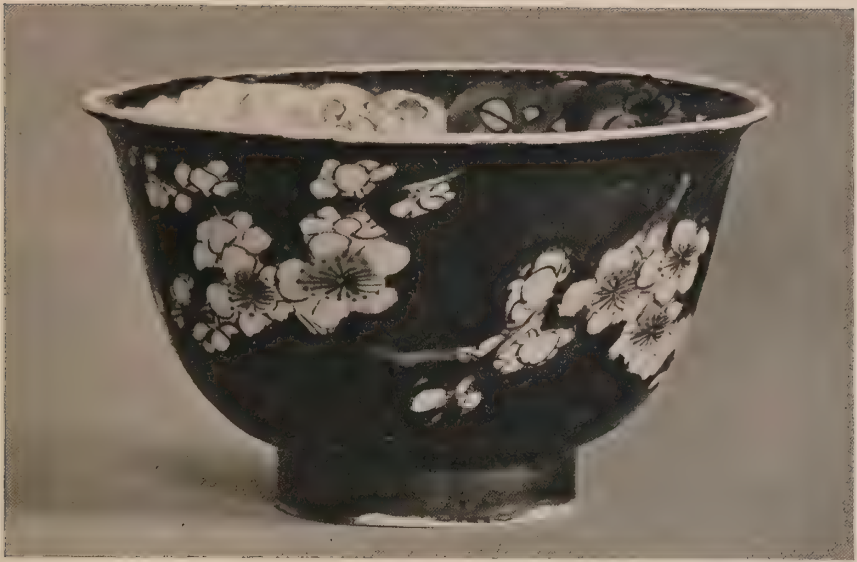

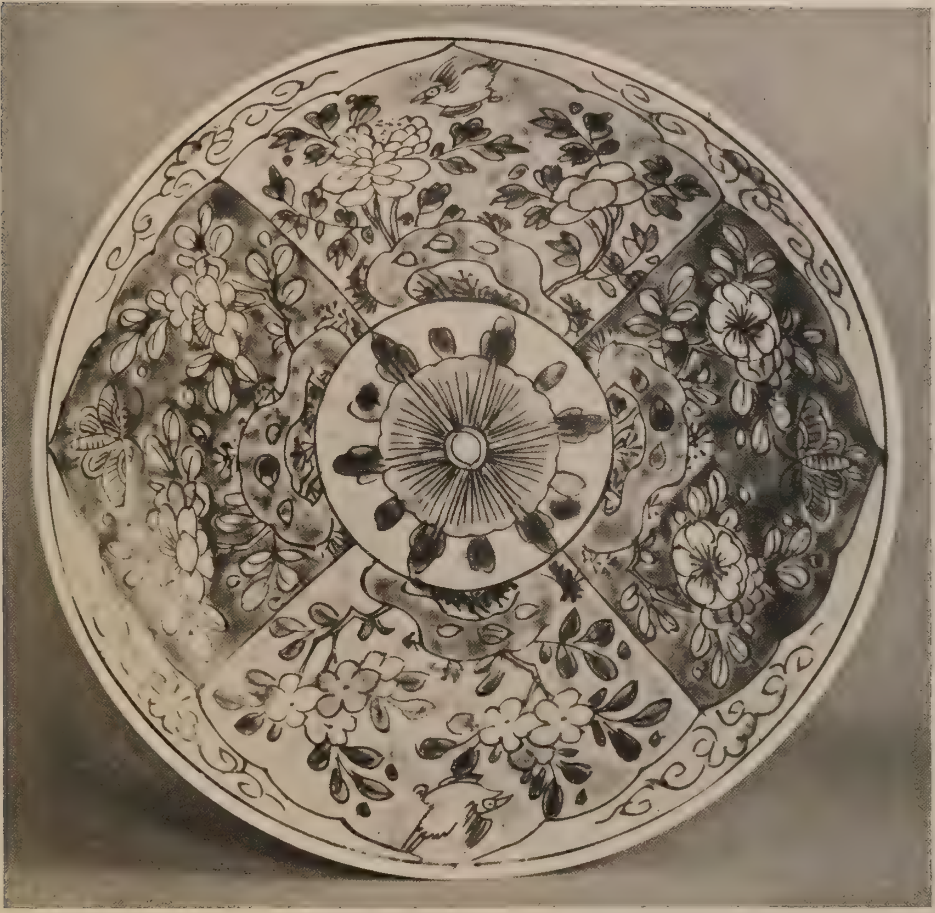

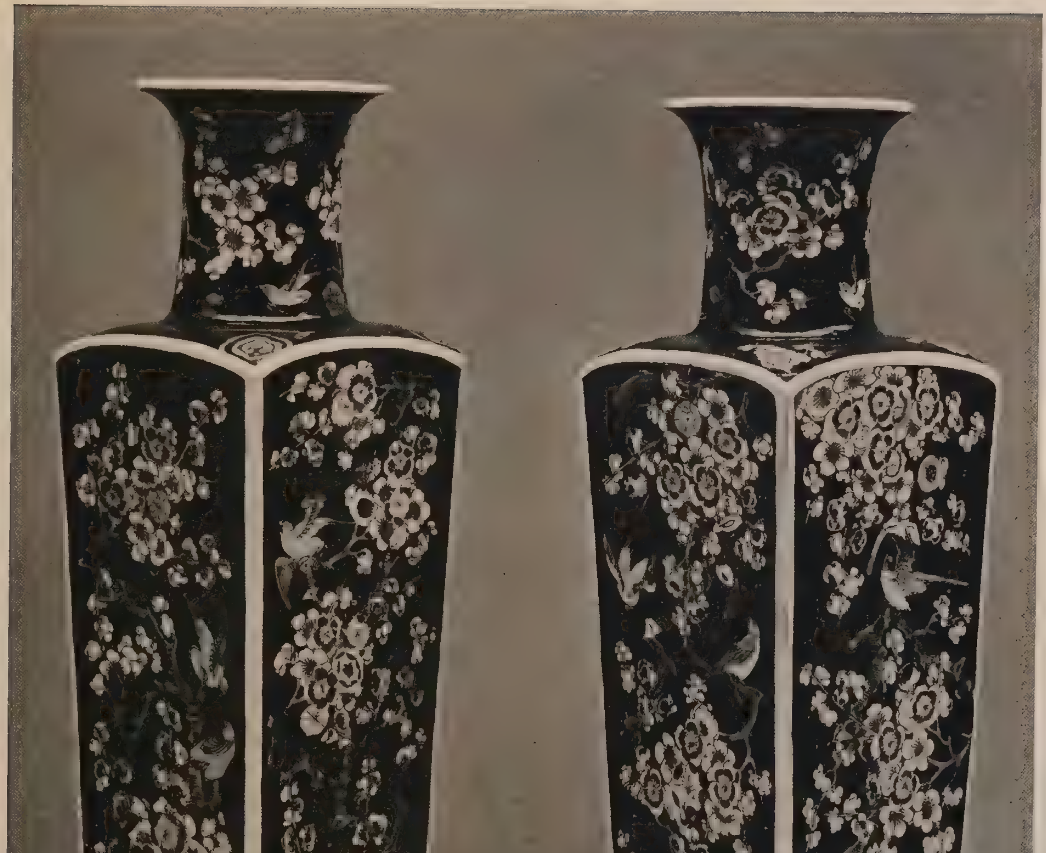

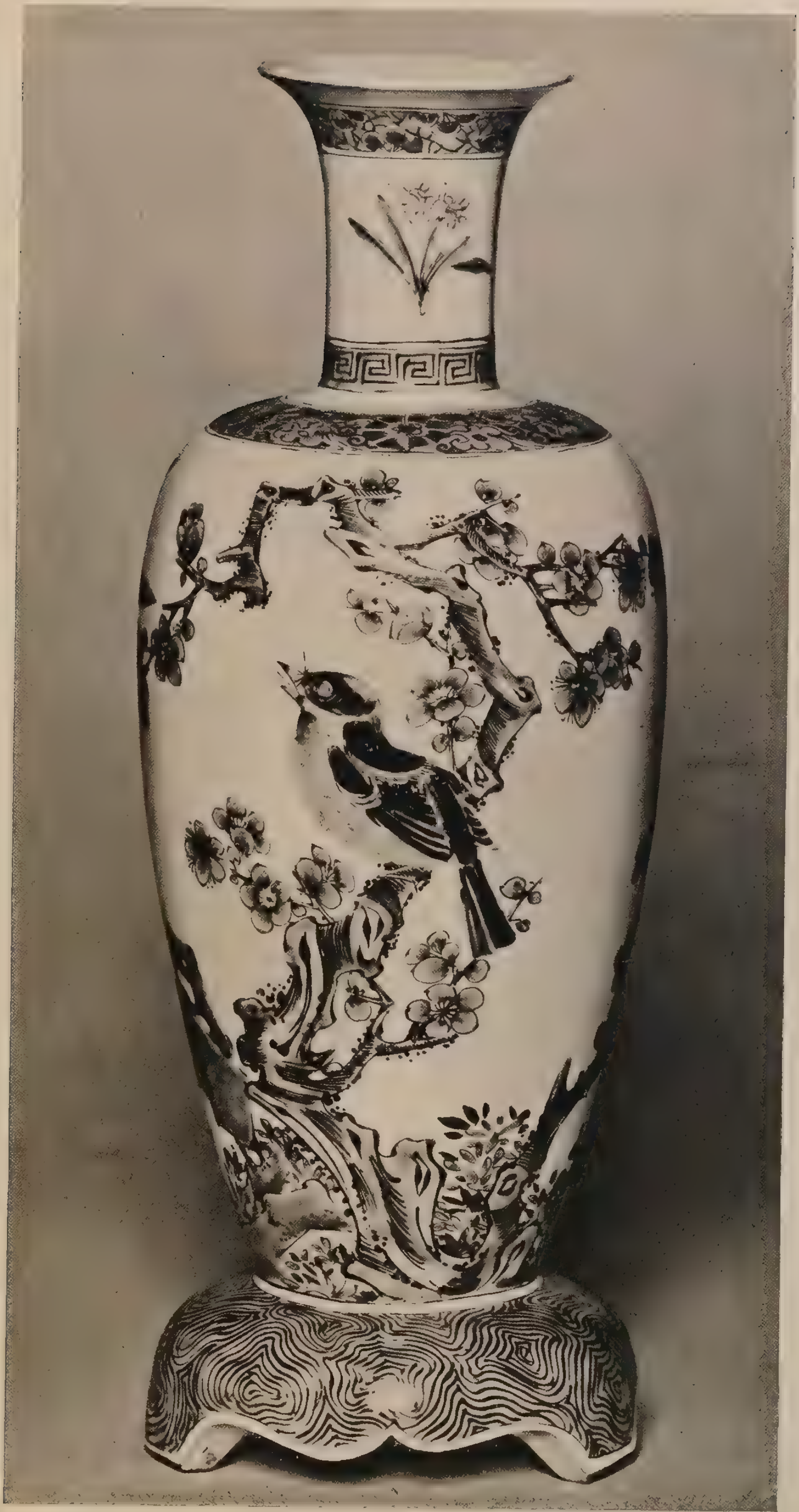

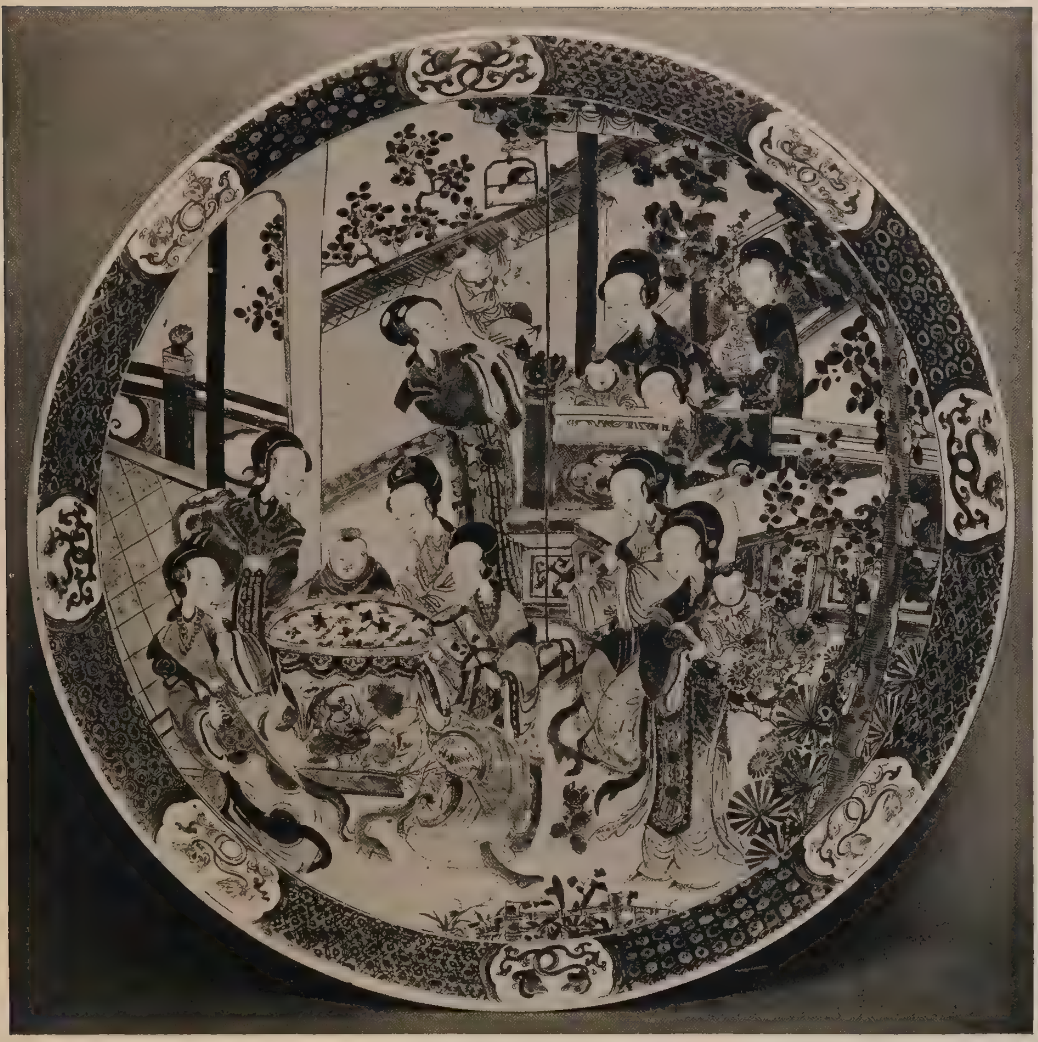

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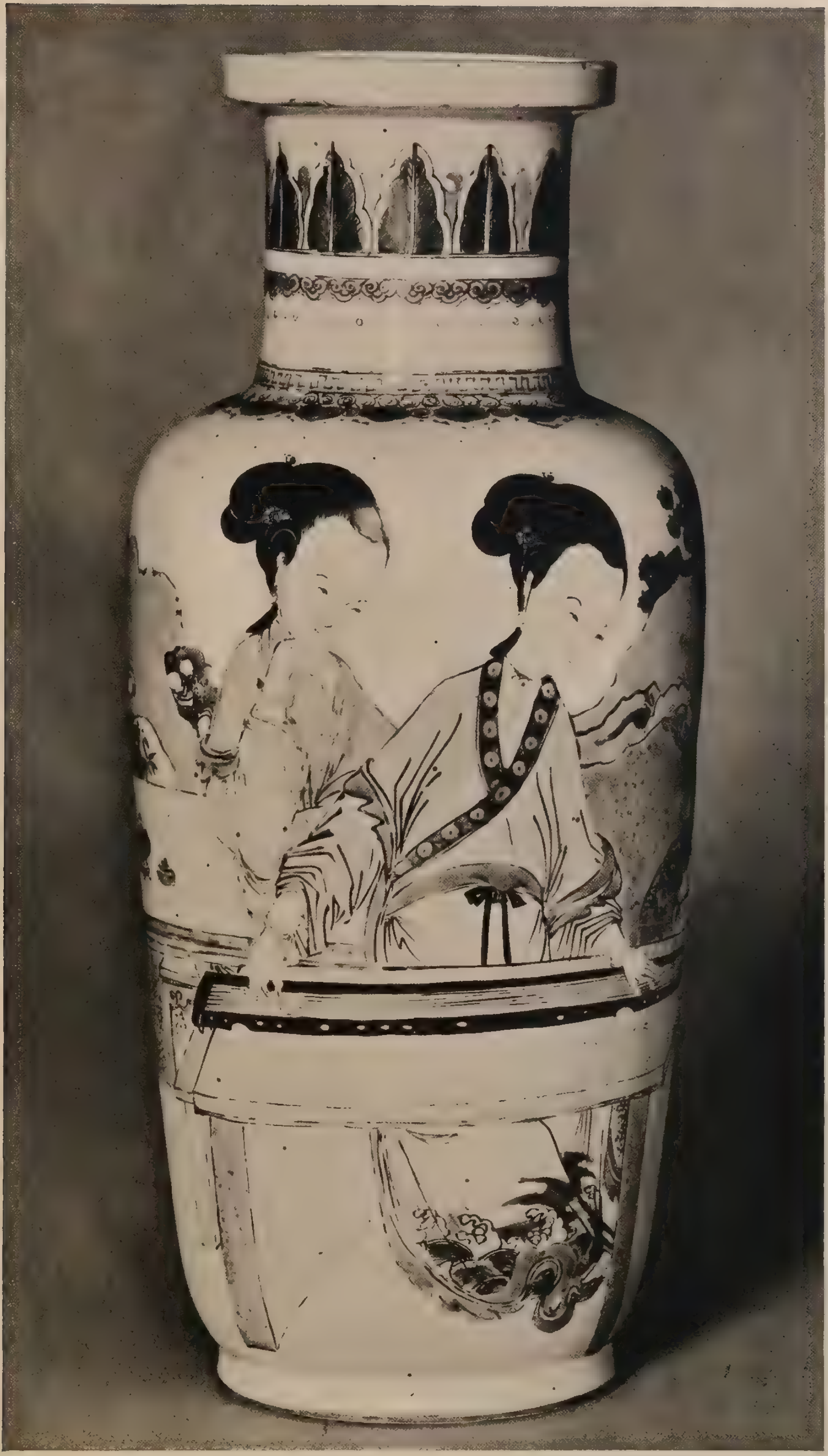

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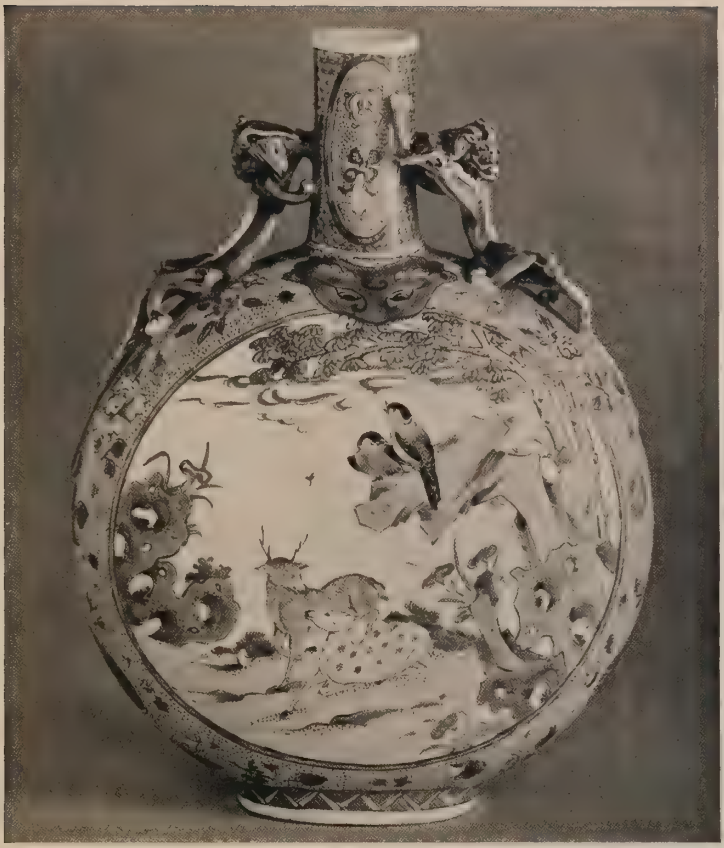

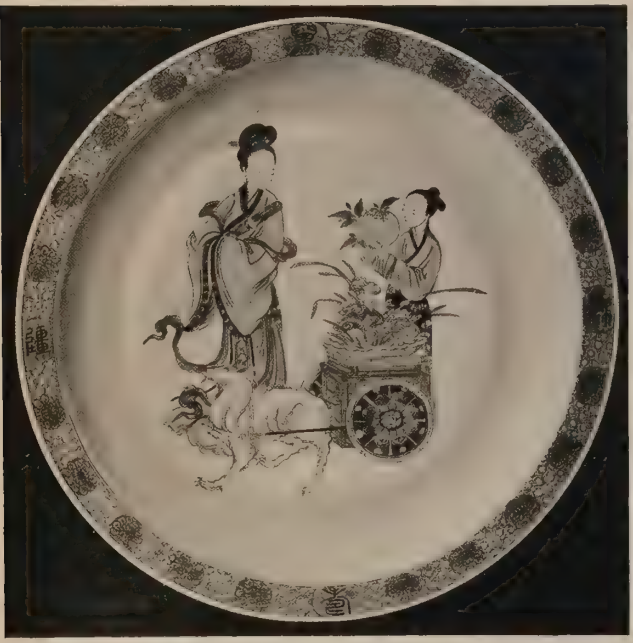

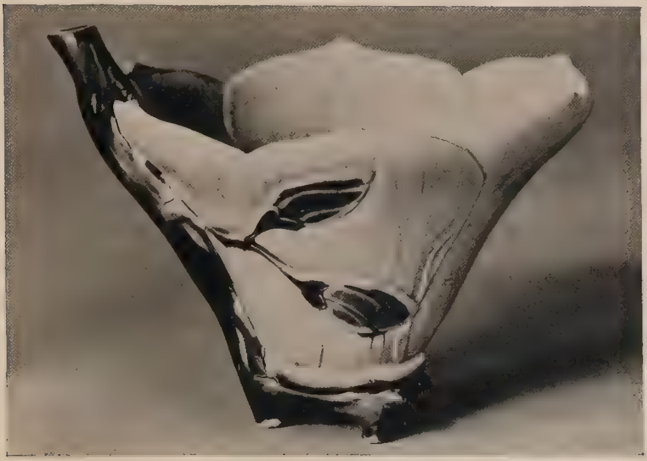

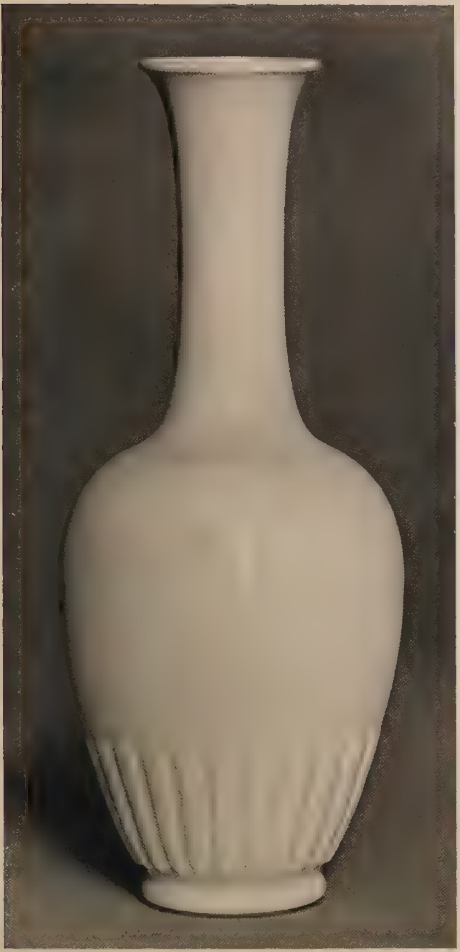

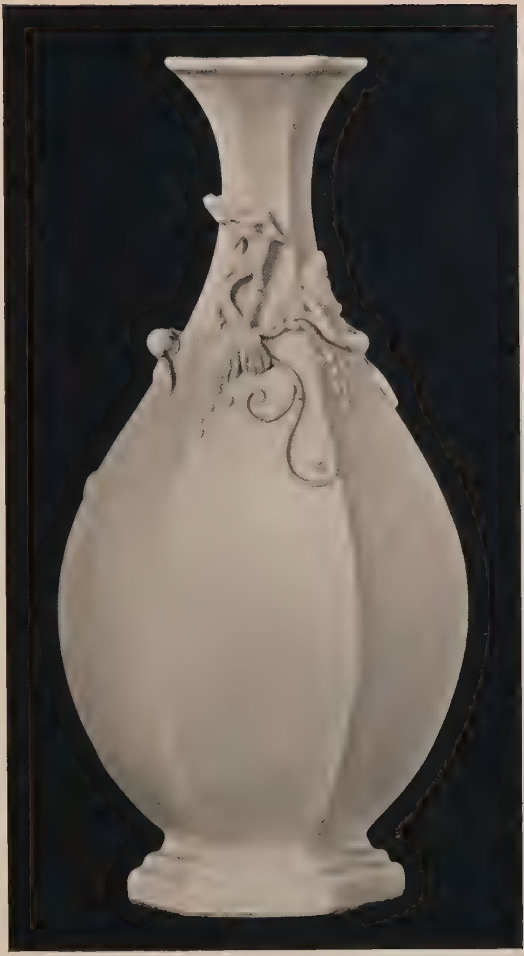

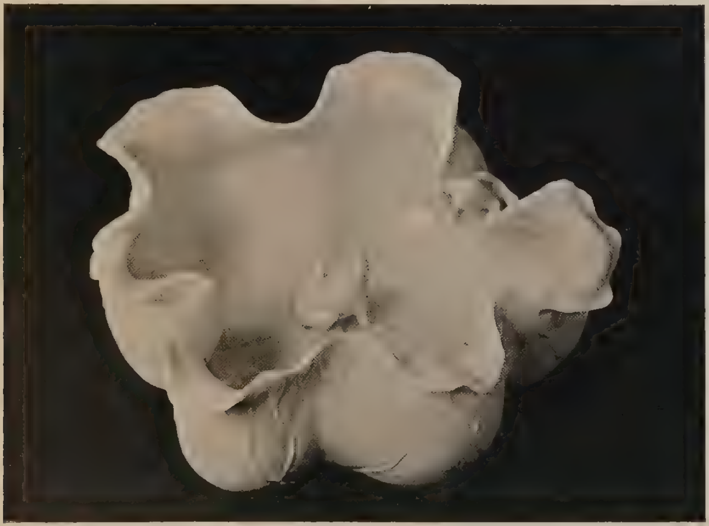

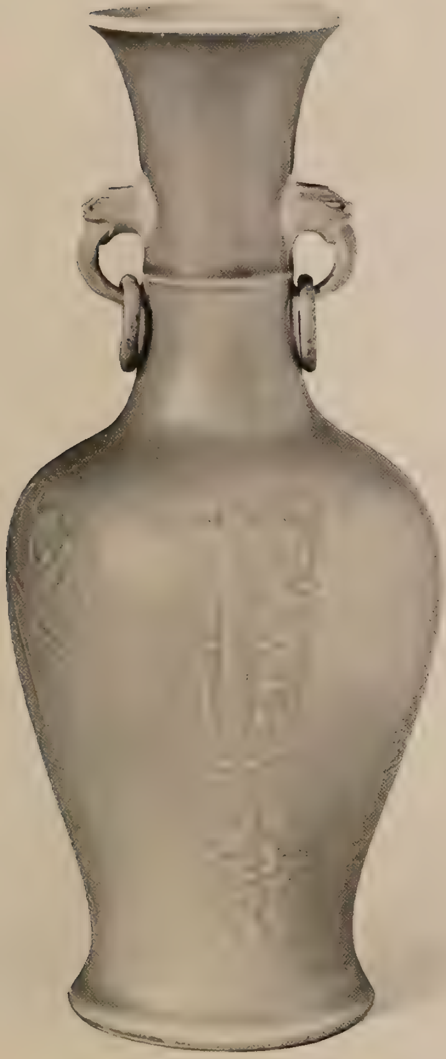

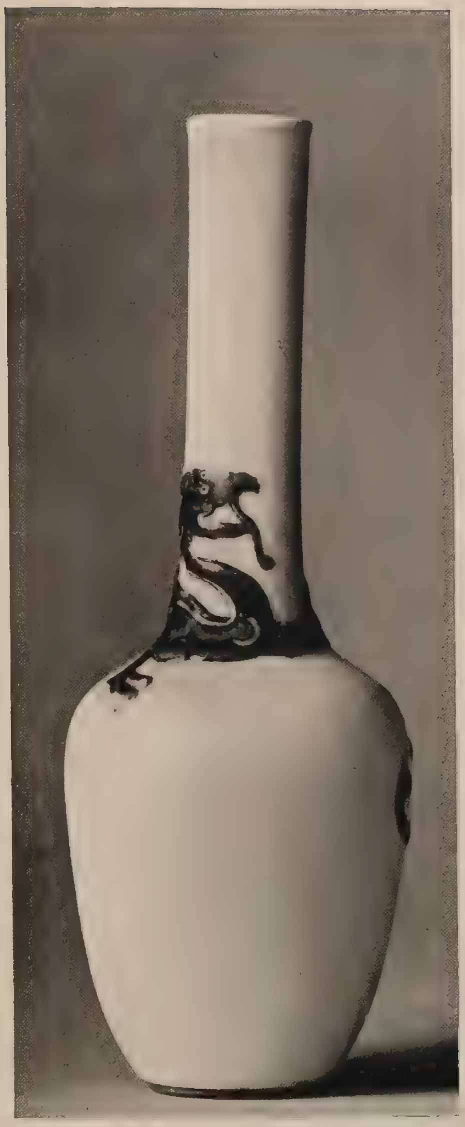

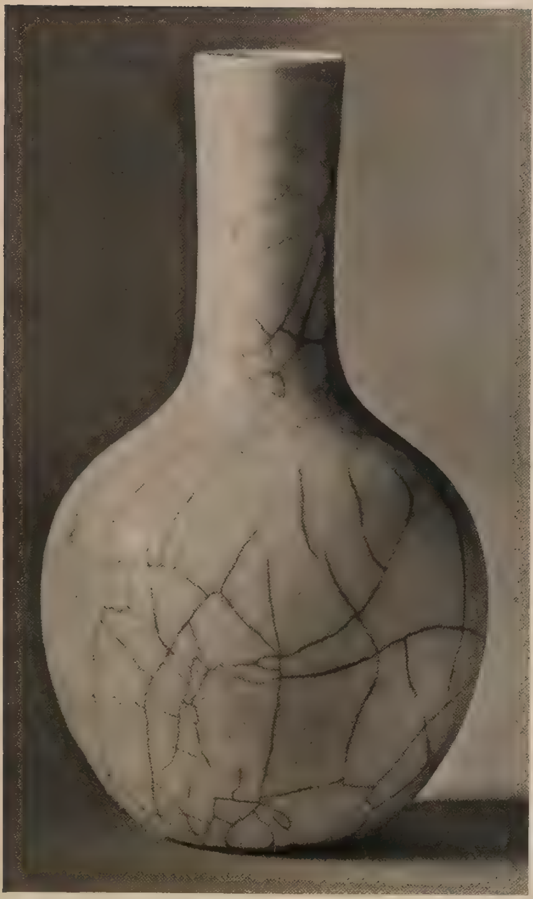

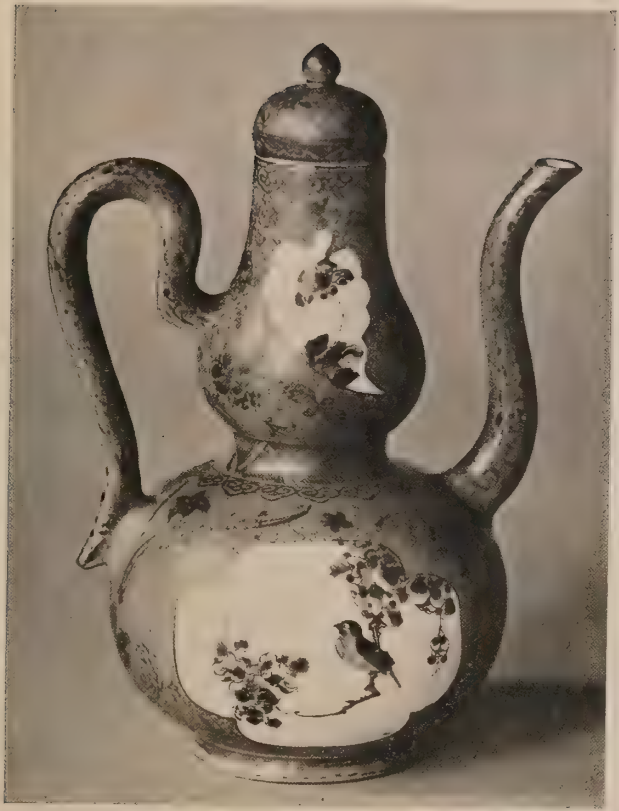

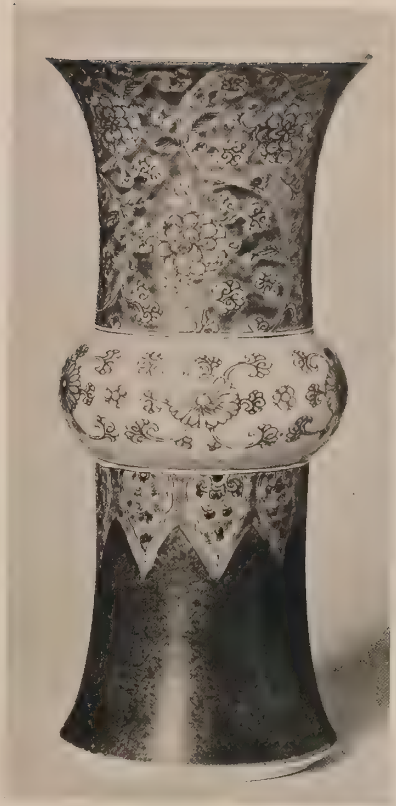

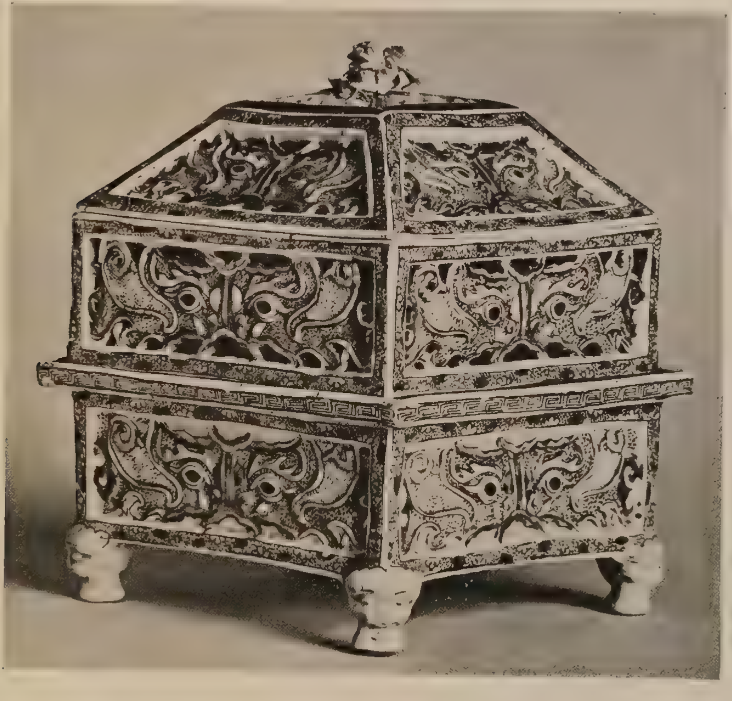

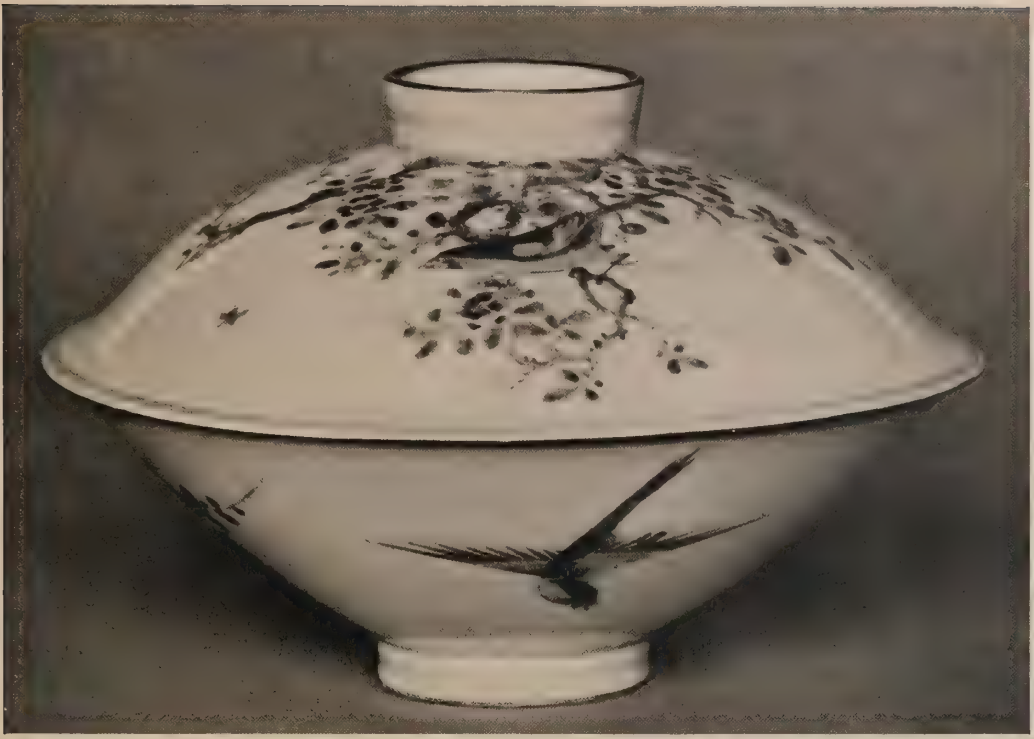

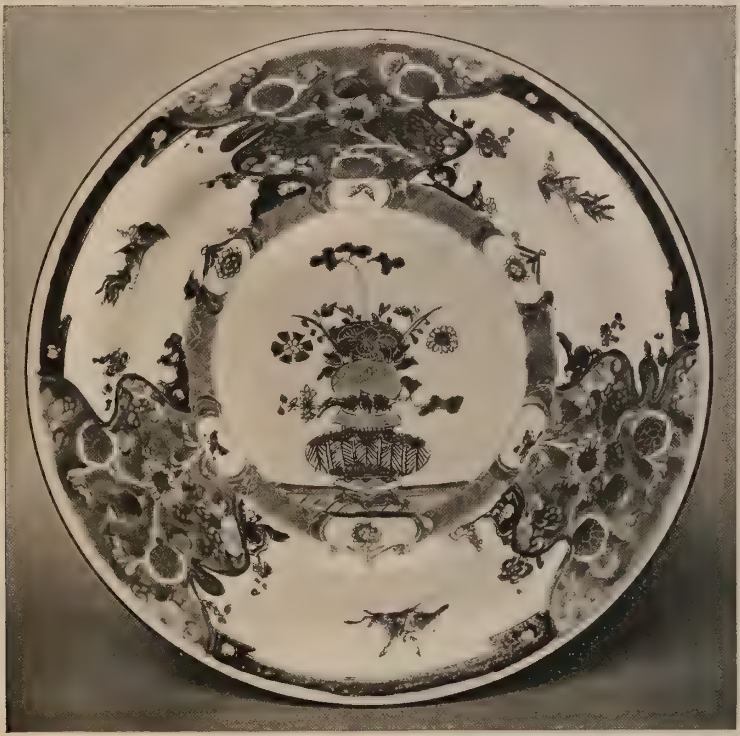

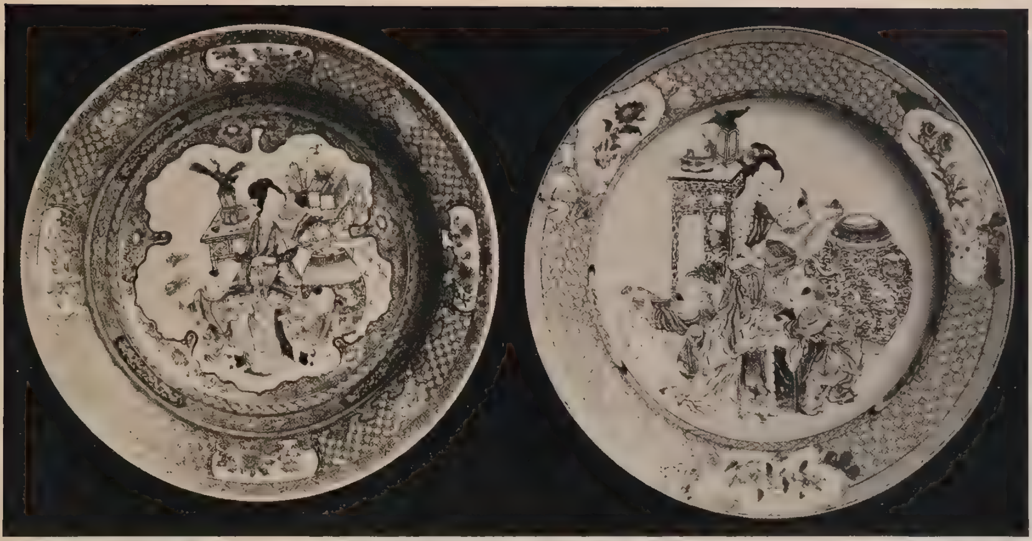

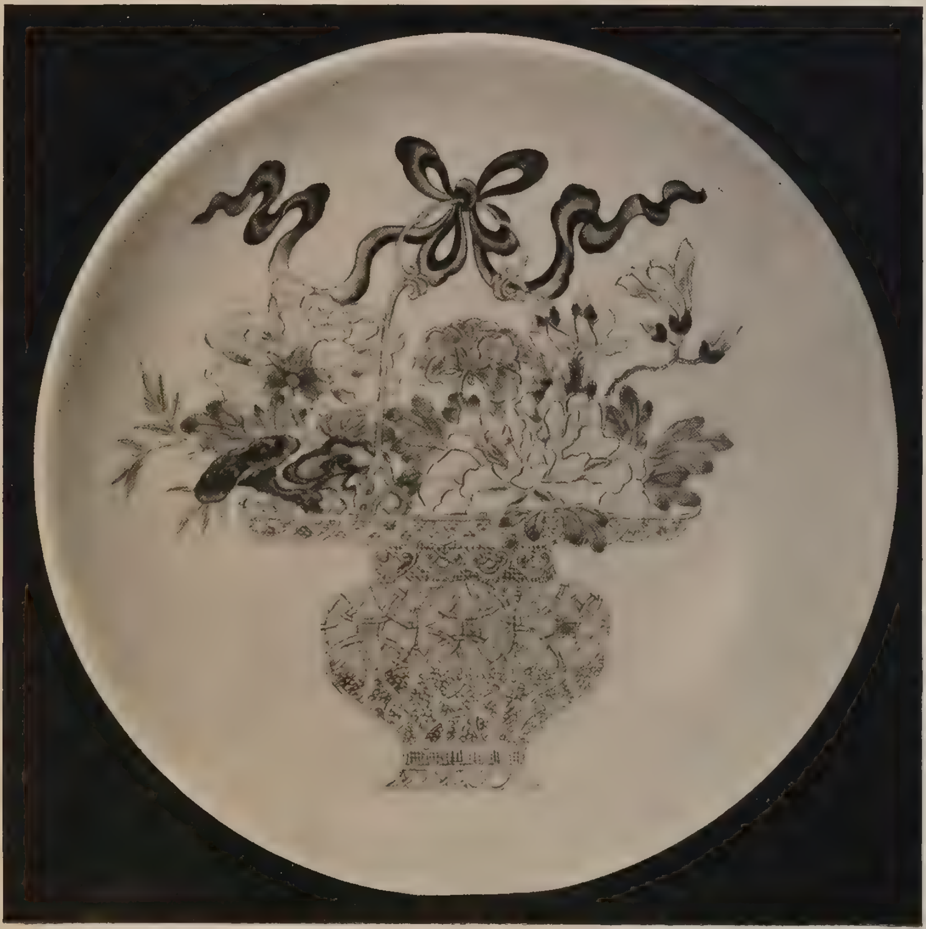

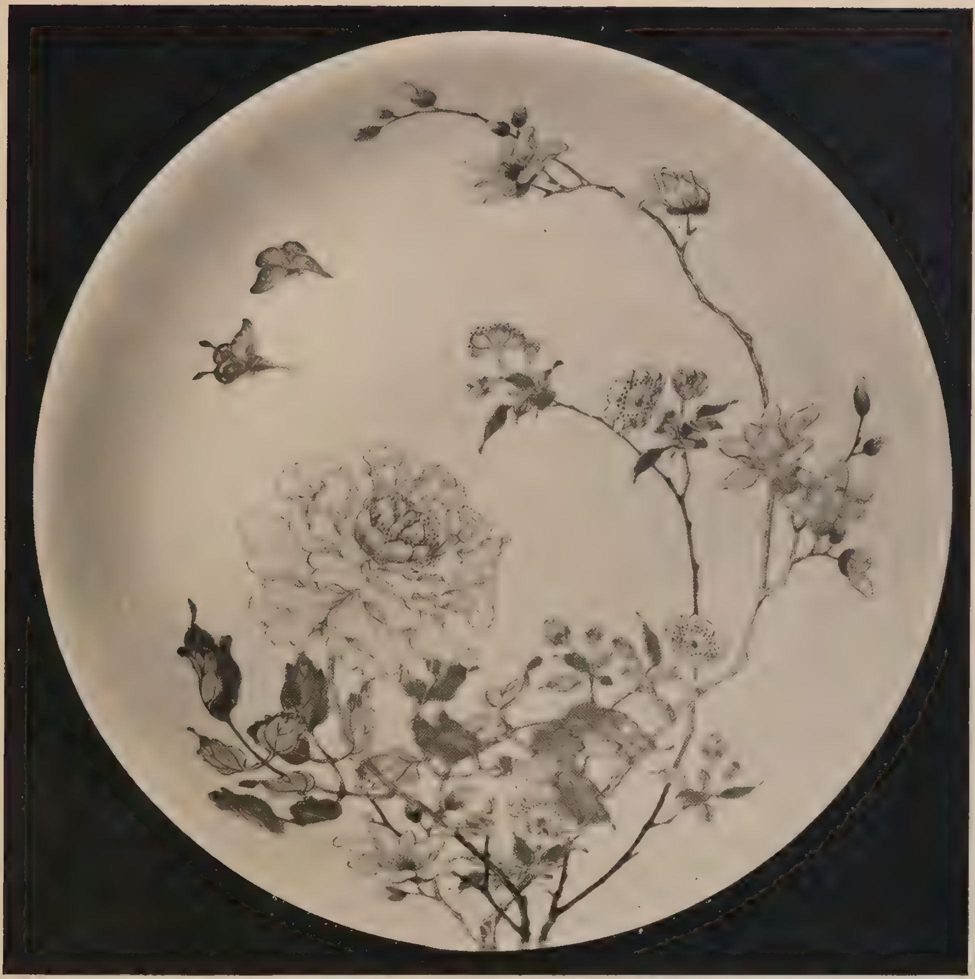

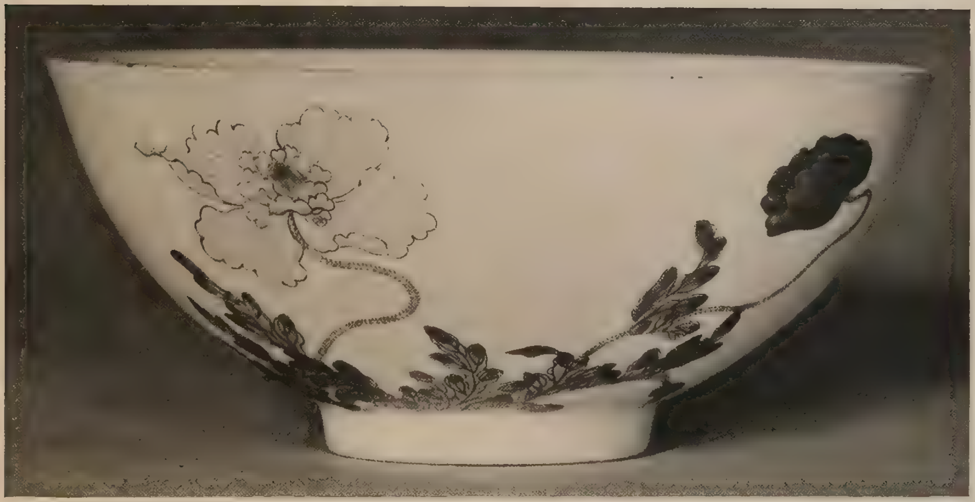

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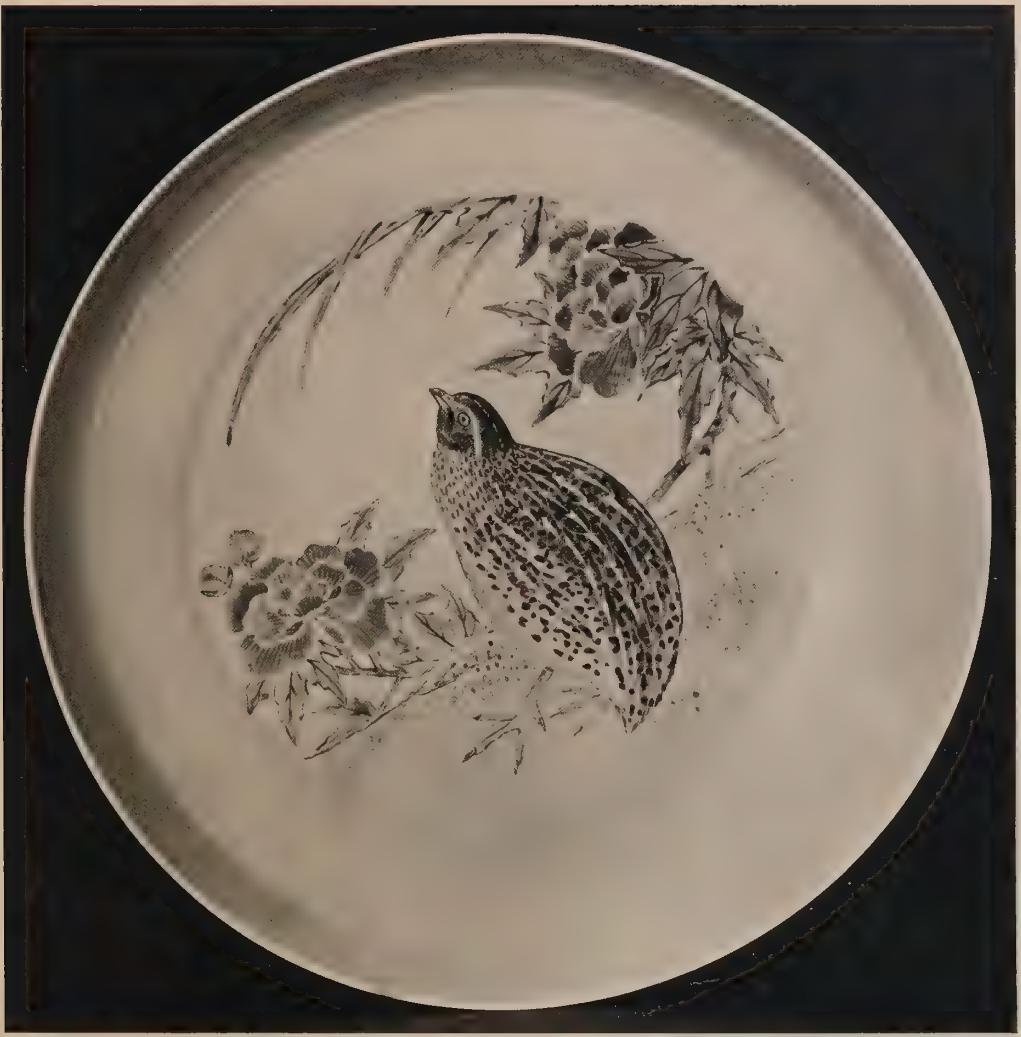

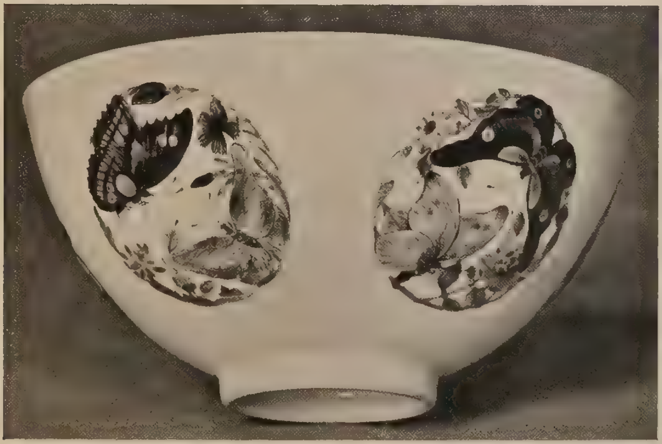

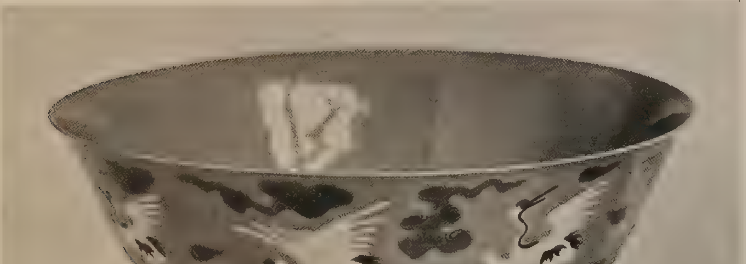

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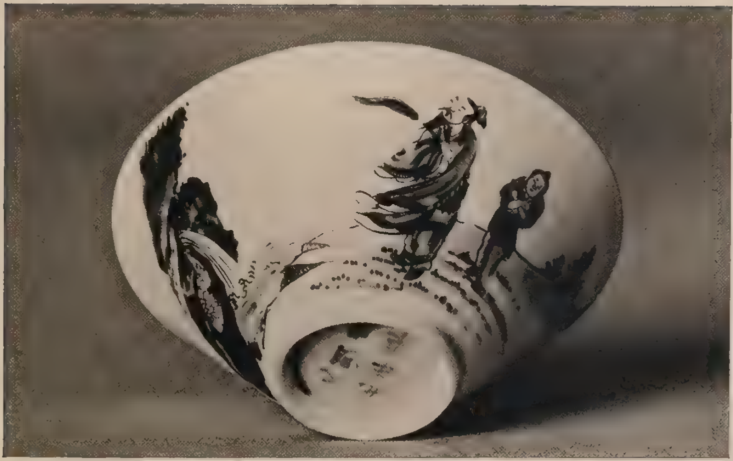

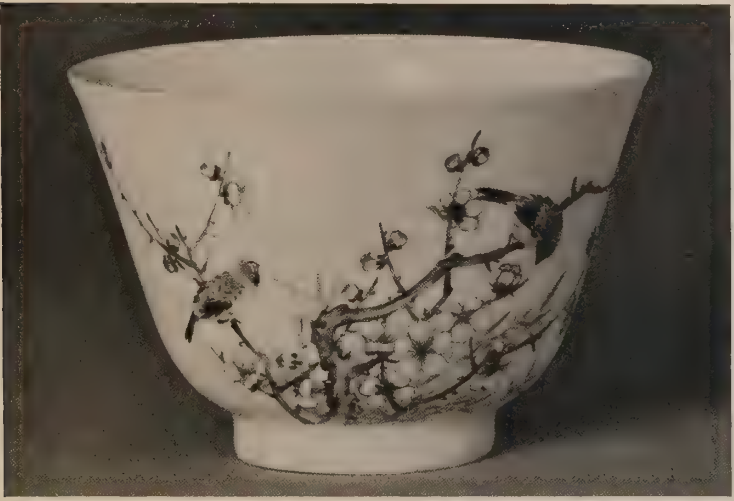

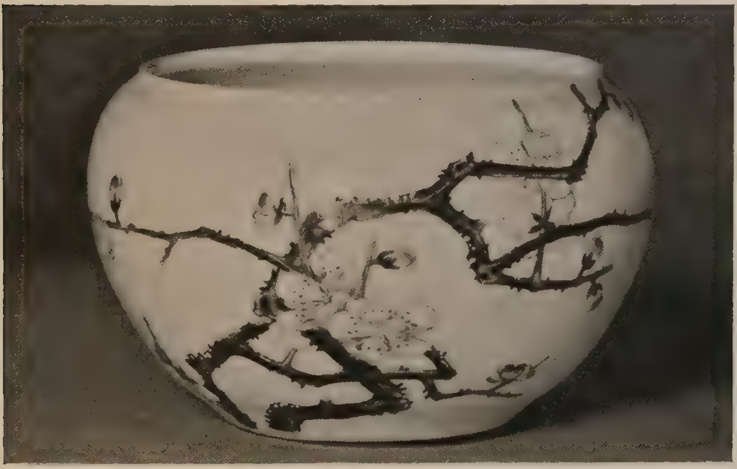

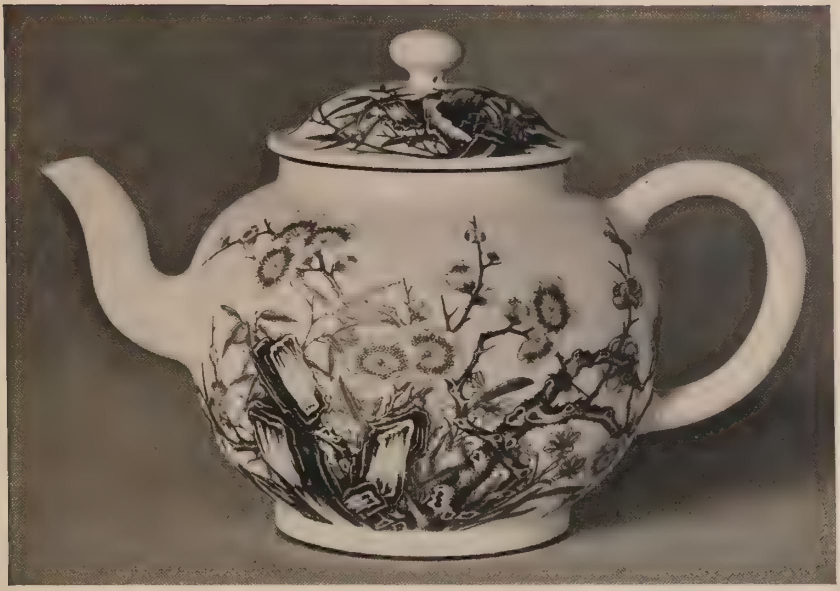

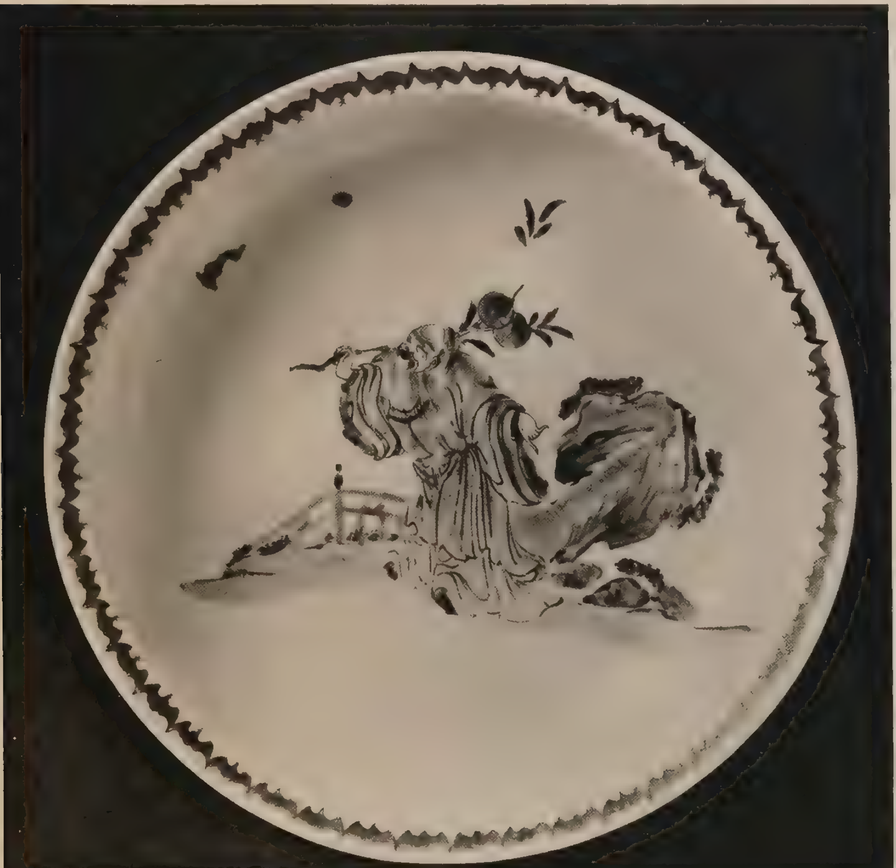

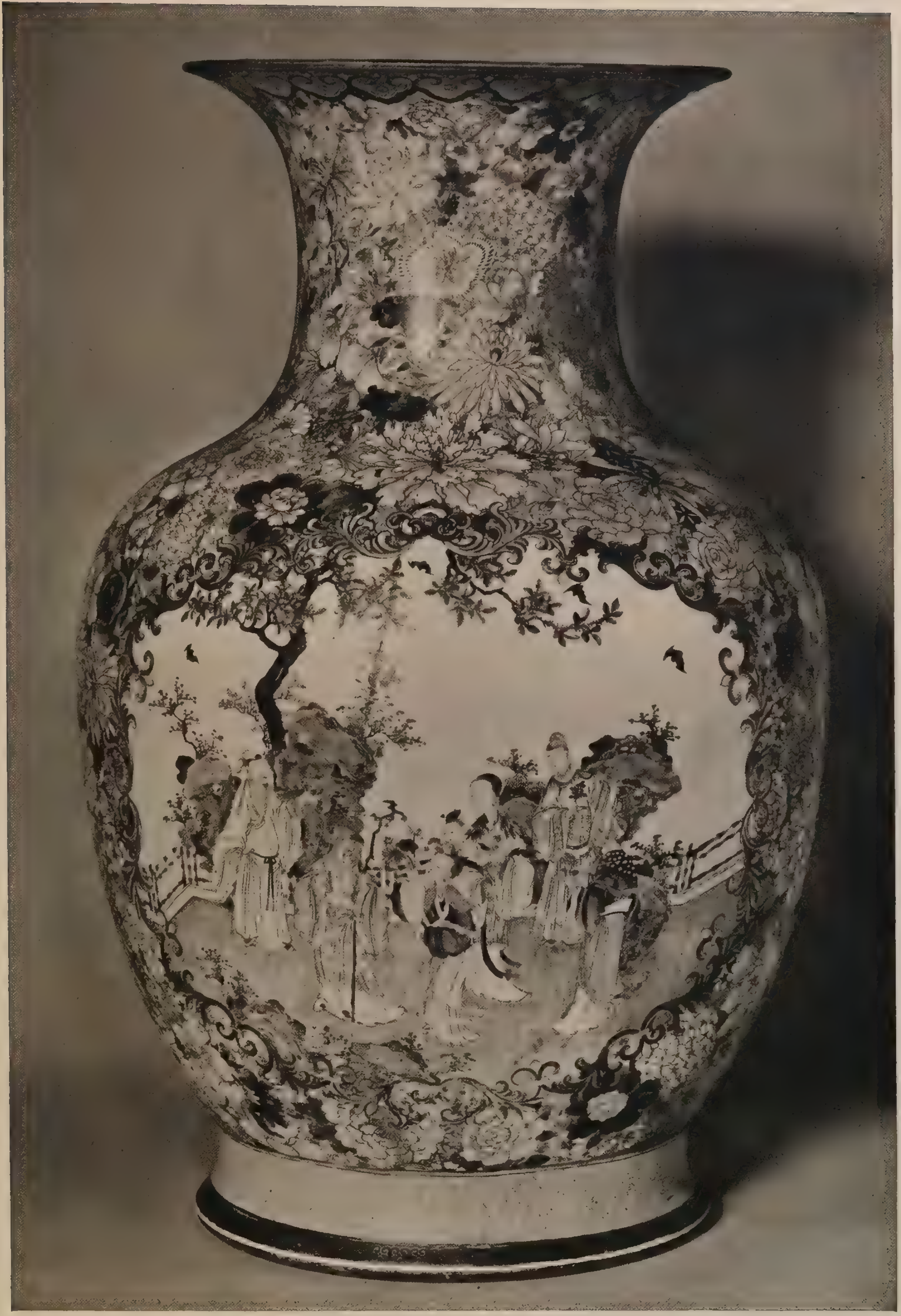

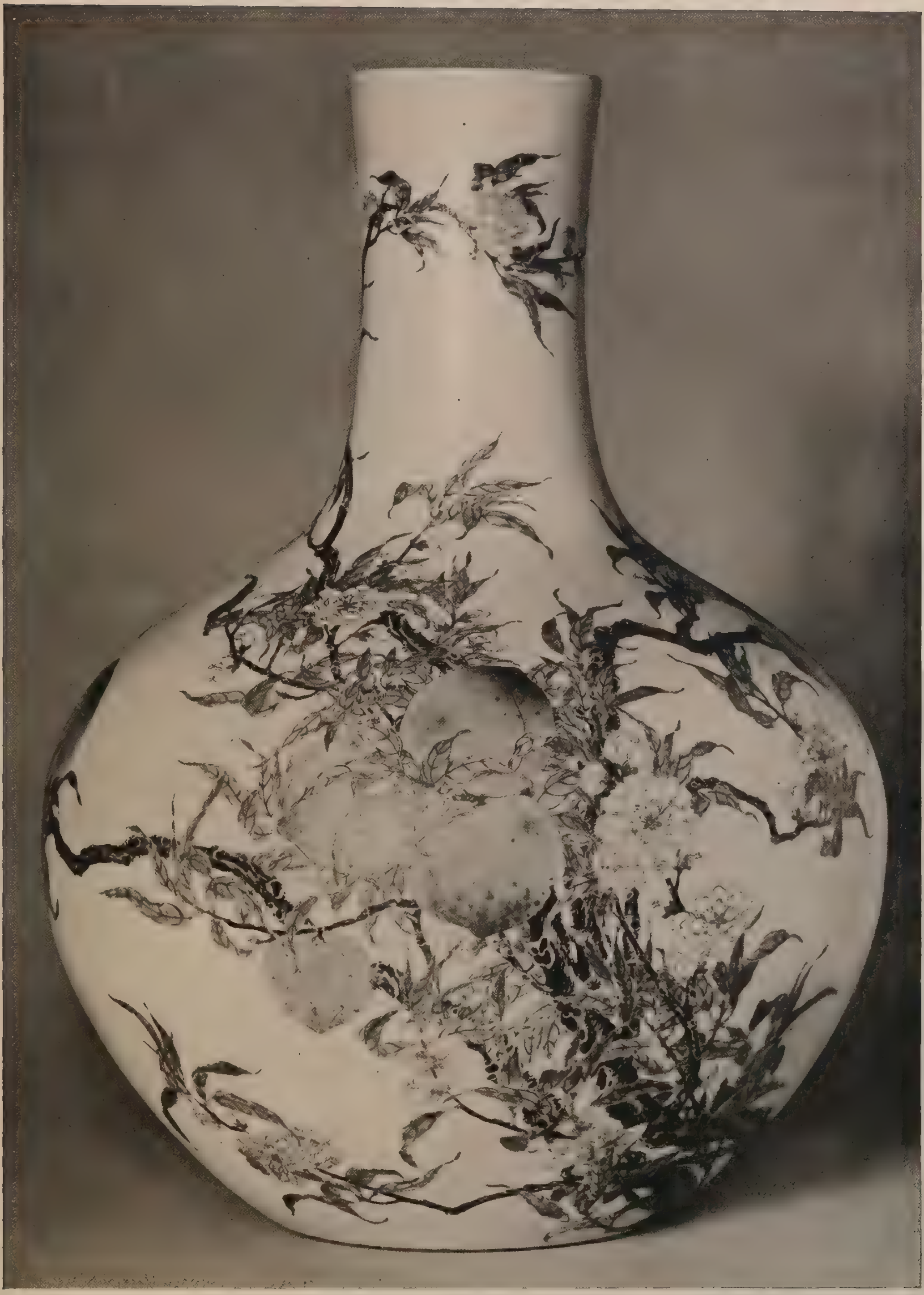

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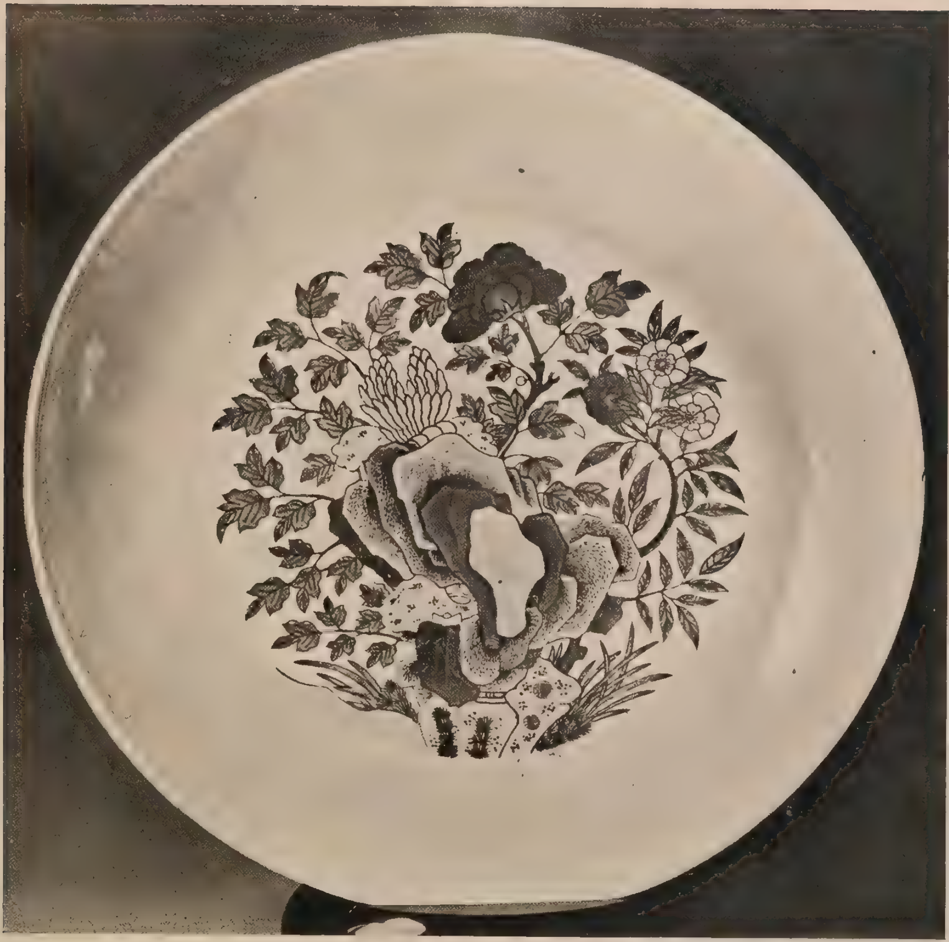

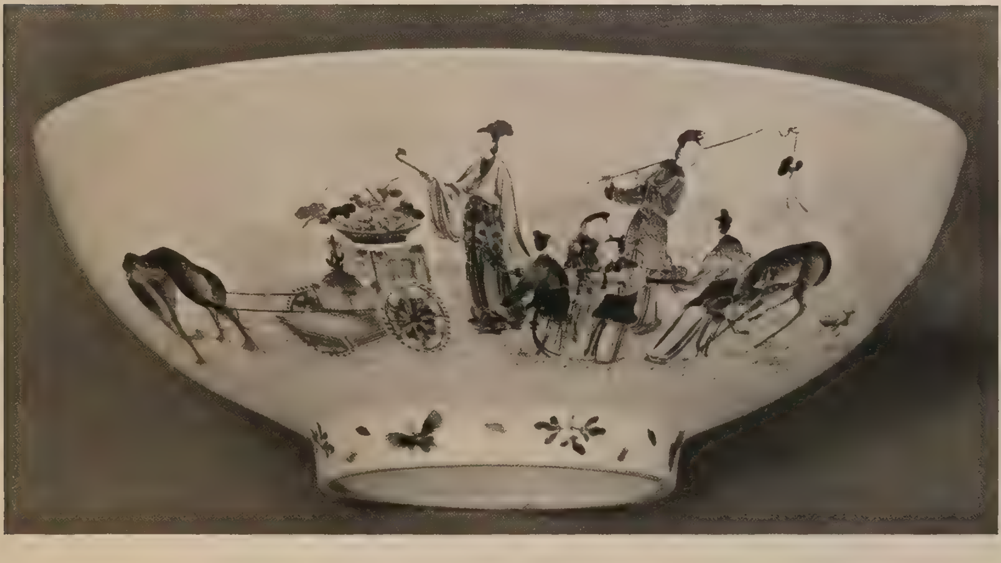

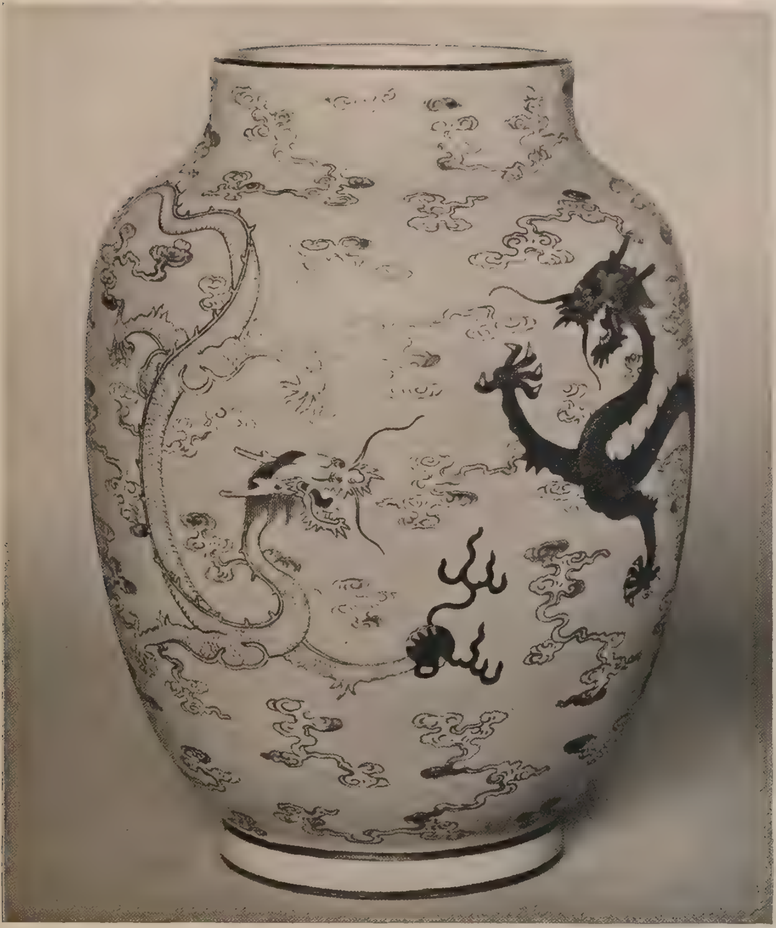

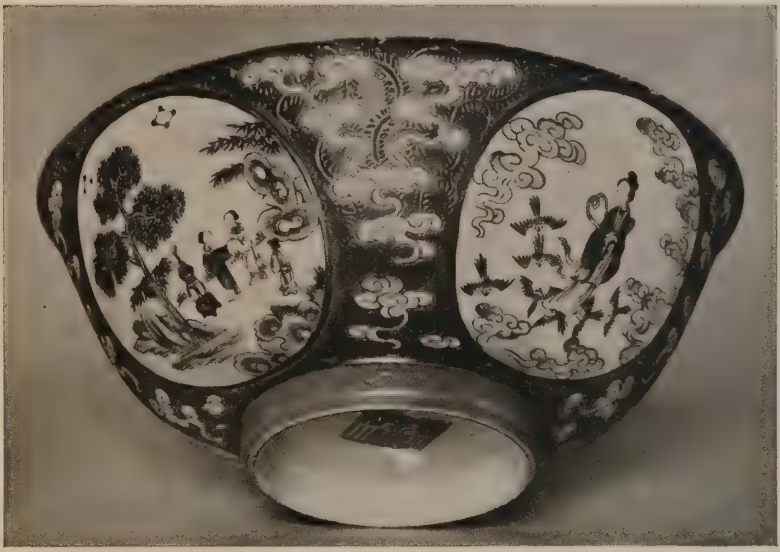

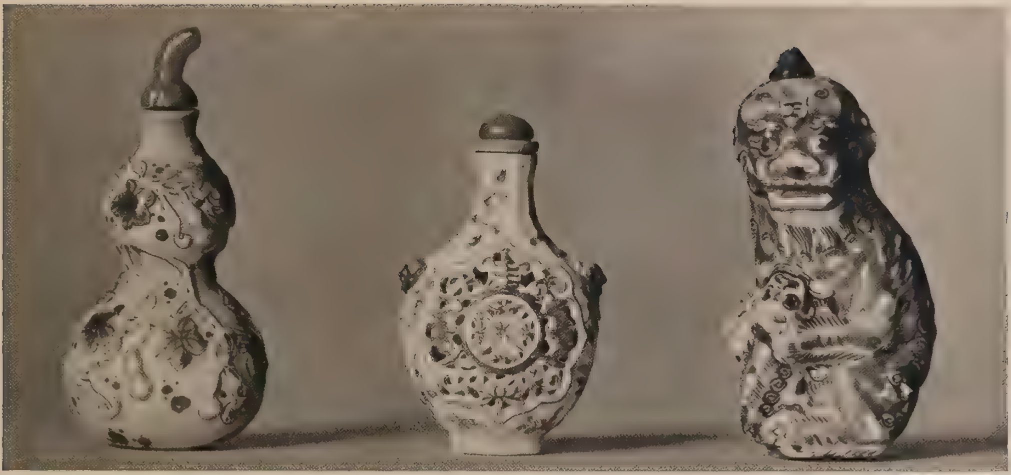

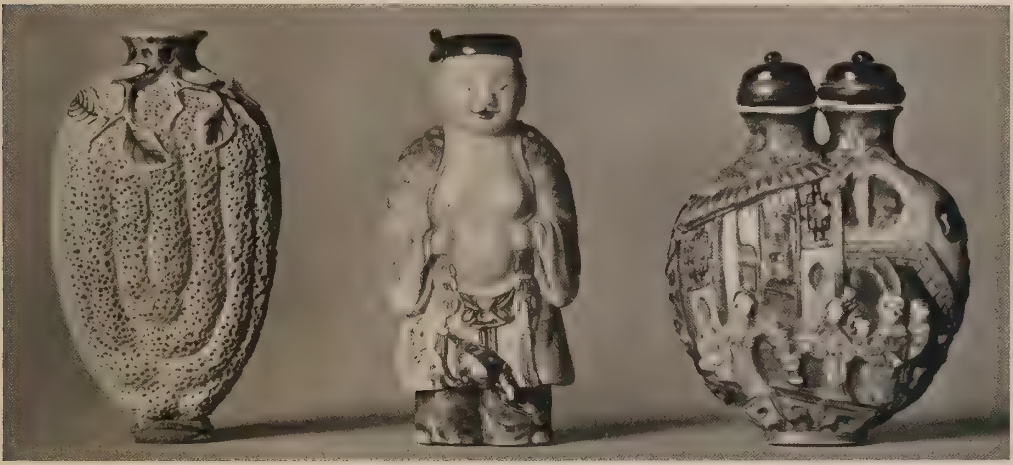

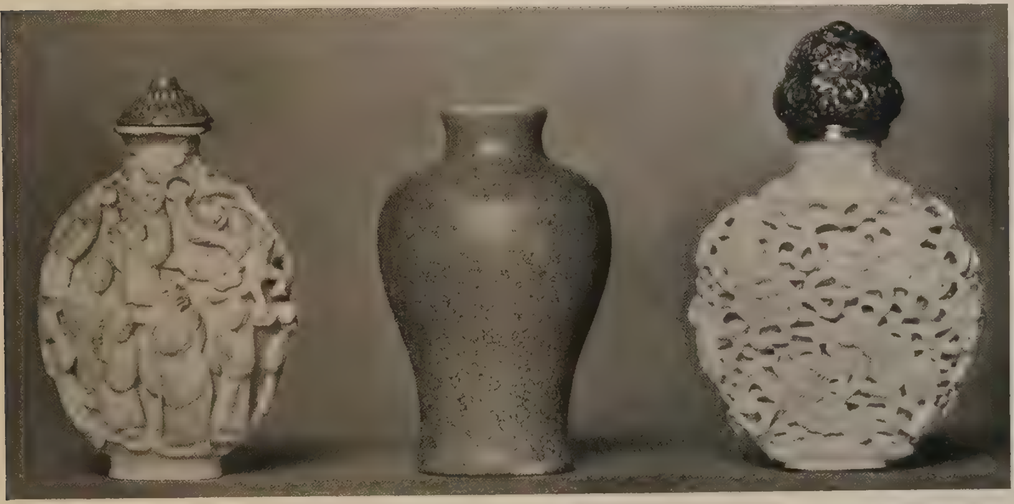

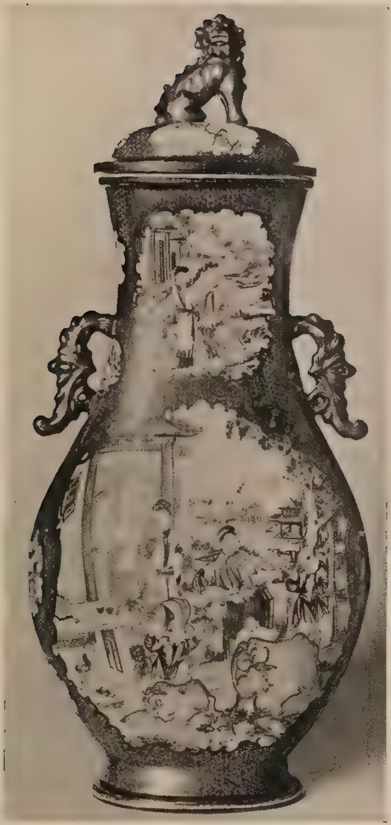

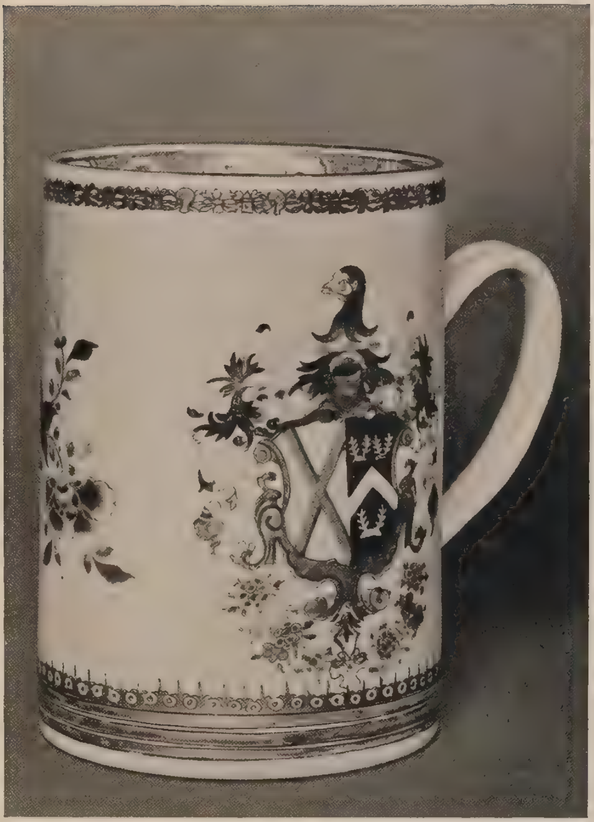

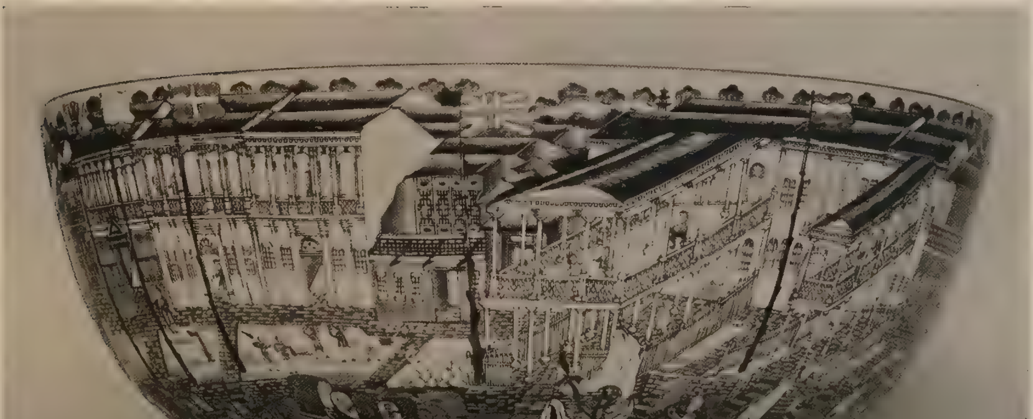

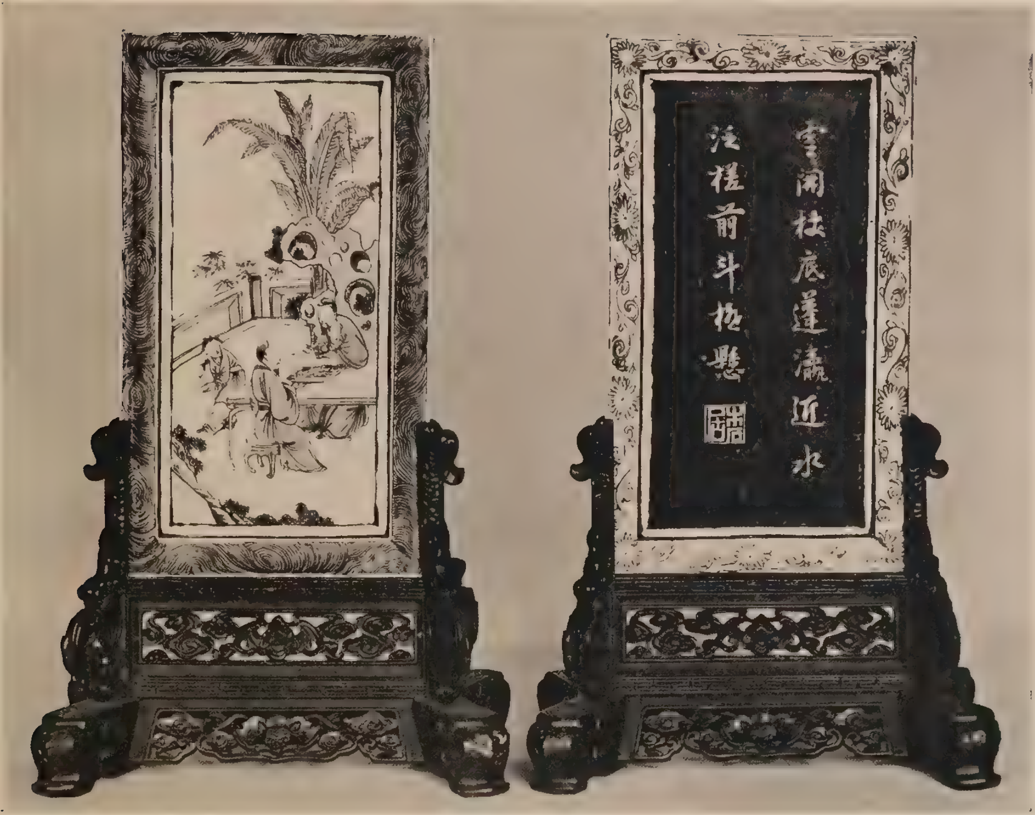
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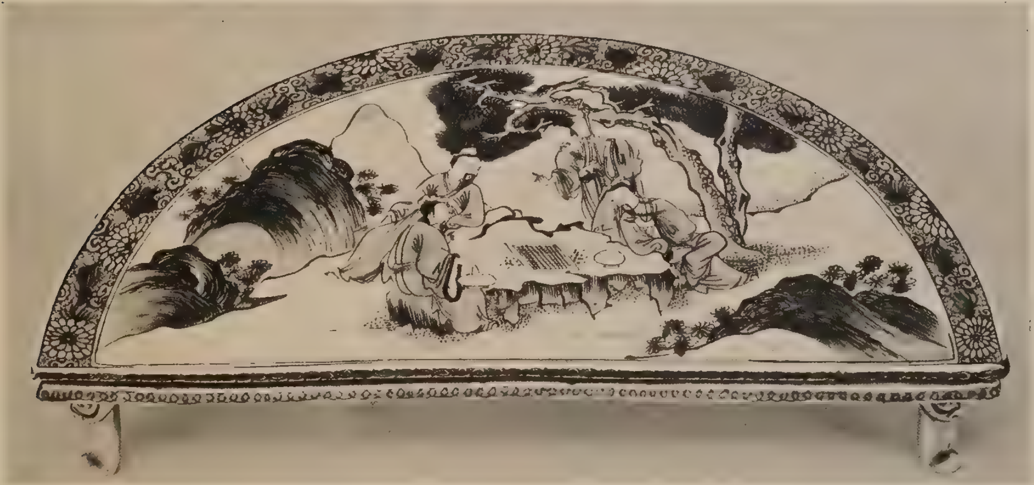

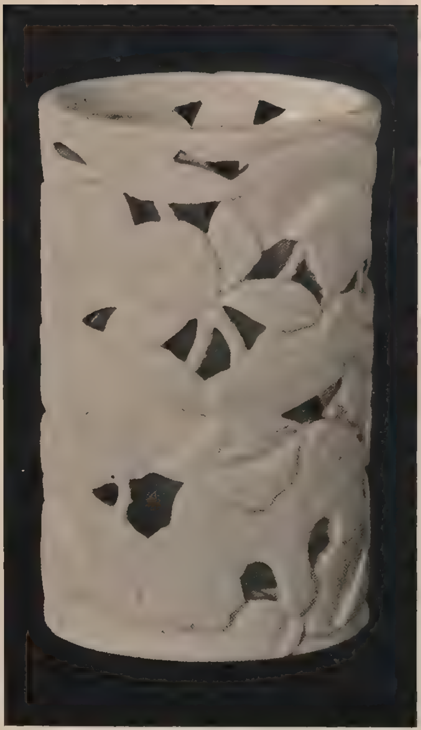

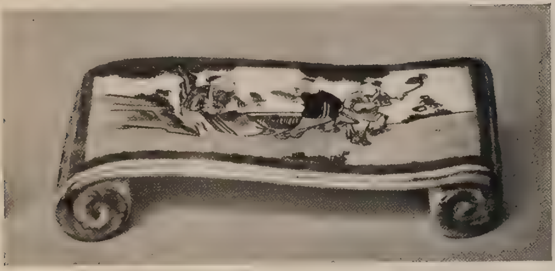

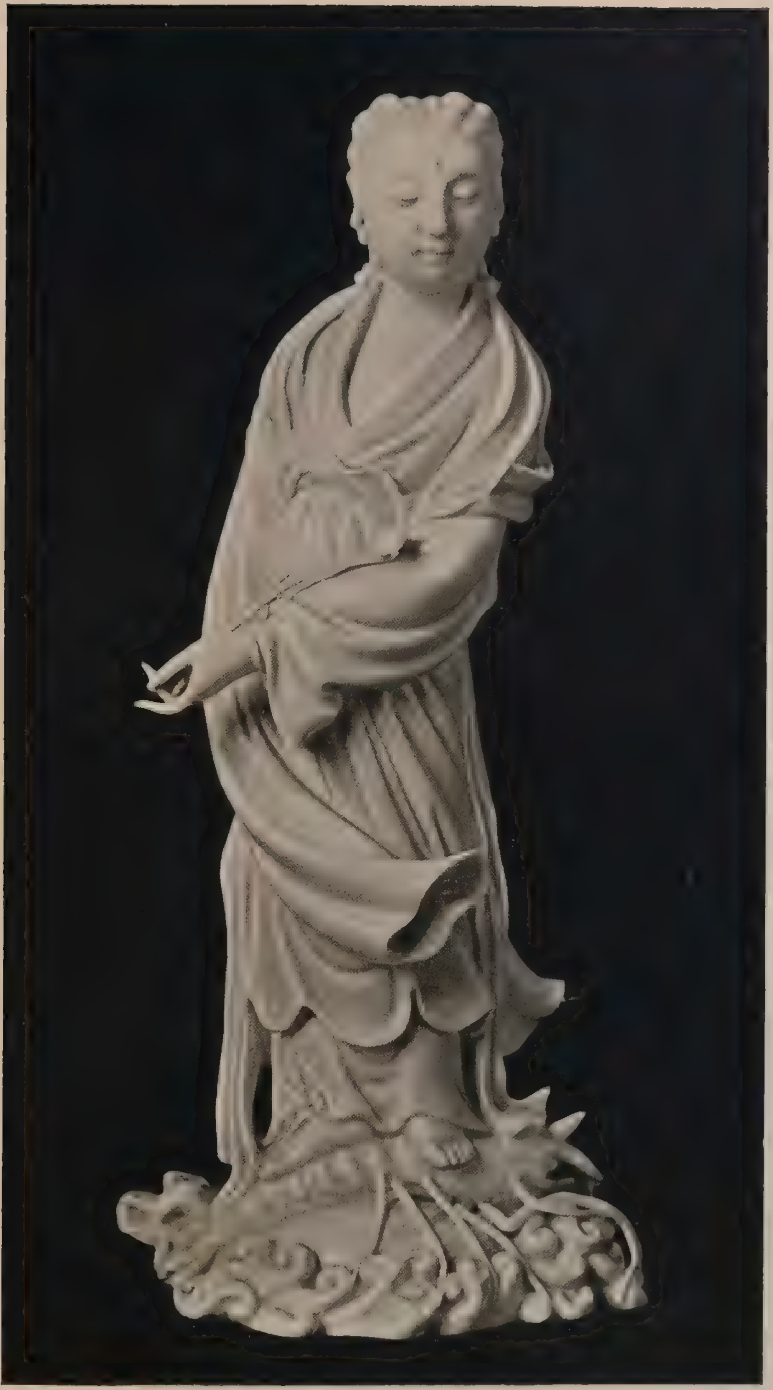

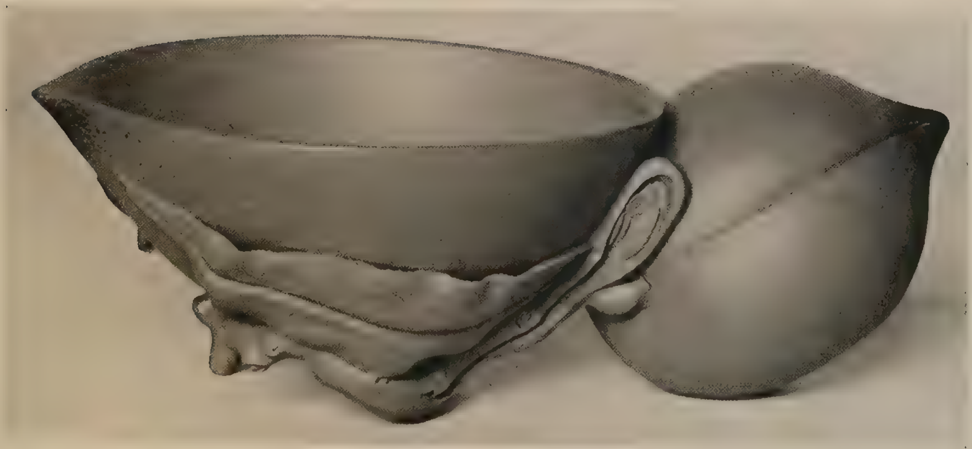

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Collated & complete –
m. B Quaritch.
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